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MARTIN LUTHER.



# THE LIFE

OF

# MARTIN LUTHER.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN EXPOSITORY ESSAY ON THE LUTHERAN  
REFORMATION.

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BY REV. GEORGE CUBITT.

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WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS  
OCCURRING DURING THE PERIOD OF LUTHER'S LIFE.

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# EXPOSITORY ESSAY

ON THE

## LUTHERAN REFORMATION.

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THERE are three different methods in which the examination of an event like the Reformation—if it should not be rather called a series of progressing and developed events—may be conducted. By the first, its principles might be investigated and tested. Such an examination would suppose the proper character of the facts to be as yet unascertained; and would have for its object the resolution of the events into their originating and component principles, and the comparison of these with some previously-acknowledged standard, that so a definite sentence might be pronounced upon the whole series. This would be the method of ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION.

By the second, the series might be examined for the avowed purpose of praise or censure. The examiner would in this case acknowledge himself to be an advocate; and assuming certain principles and rules as the foundation of his sentences, he would proceed to show that, according to these, the events considered were correct or erroneous, right or wrong. This would be the method of ADVOCACY; and provided that, at the very outset, the standard of judgment is fairly delivered, it is a method which the examiner has not only a right

to employ, but which he may often employ with advantage.

But there is a third method, somewhat different from either of the others. It may, for the sake of distinction, be termed the method of EXPOSITION. In this case, the examiner may be supposed previously to have so considered the subject as to have *made up his mind* upon it. The facts have all been examined, and are associated with settled judgments of approval or blame. An Essay constructed on this principle will aim chiefly at information. The writer will not conceal from his readers that he has a decided opinion on the subject which he is about to bring before them, and may very properly assume that, on all the leading principles of the case, their opinions coincide with his own. What he seeks to do is to make that coincidence more complete by a careful explanation. He will endeavour, therefore, to give such a statement of the leading facts of the case as shall make the development of their principles an easier task, and enable the reader to distinguish between what are only accidental adjuncts, and what are rationally and properly effects and results.

To this last-mentioned class the present Essay is intended to belong. It is not intended to be *polemic*. The writer is a Protestant, and he writes for Protestants. Facts, of course, are facts, and are to be considered *as such*; but their *character* supposes some acknowledged standard; and, in the present case, that standard is, *the written word of God*. Assuming that Luther was essentially right, the object of the following remarks is rather statement and development, than defence. Where, indeed, it appears to be necessary, renewed investigation will be instituted; sincere and earnest

advocacy will be employed ; but the chief object will be to furnish such an exposition of the facts, principles, and results furnished, or suggested, by the history of Dr. Martin Luther, the great German reformer, as shall assist the general reader in forming a decided opinion of the Reformation itself.

Some preliminary observations, showing the NECESSITY of ecclesiastical reform in the time of Luther, as well as the principles on which alone it could safely be conducted, will be called for in the very first instance. The Wittenberg professor effected great and lasting changes ; and the all-important question on the subject is, Were those changes only heretical innovations ; or were they movements in return to a primitive, a lost, but necessary purity ?

And such an inquiry is the more important, for that it has been recently shown, both more clearly and more impressively than ever, that the discontents which in the mind of Luther ripened into opposition, and produced eventual separation, were not confined to him. Ranke has shown that there were in Italy ecclesiastics, and ecclesiastics high in office, whose opinions on doctrinal subjects very nearly coincided with those of Luther ; and who therefore could not but believe that the visible church had become unfaithful to her high trust, and was no longer the pillar and ground of the truth. And with these men, religious doctrine was not mere intellectual opinion, much less the adoption of certain verbal propositions which they were, from their official situation, bound to support. In reality, those opinions which approached most nearly to the belief of Luther and his associates will be found to refer not so much to the great facts of religion, (as compendiously

stated, for instance, in the Apostles' Creed,) as to the real nature of religion itself, and to the rule and extent of the obedience which is, by divine appointment, made necessary to salvation.

But while such men as Cardinal Pole seem to have thought that the primary opinions of Luther were not so erroneous as polemics like Eccius described them, they likewise seem to have thought that the principles on which the visible union of the church in their day depended had an importance which placed them far above all other subjects of controversy, and required that they should be supported even at the risk of darkening what they acknowledged to be light from heaven. Luther, on the other hand, regarded what he believed to be the truth as being superior to every other consideration. When the alternative was presented, that he should either suppress what he was persuaded was true, or renounce his connection with Rome, his decision was soon declared. His language was, in effect, "Whatever else is retained or renounced, the truth of God must be both held and preached."

It may be useful to notice the issue of the resolution of those divines to whom allusion has just been made. They regarded the church as a corporate body, constituted by the visible succession of a certain class of ecclesiastical officers; and that—for this the history of this visible succession most absolutely requires—without any reference to the personal character and religious opinions of the officers themselves, or even to the mode of their election. The episcopal succession, as the line was marked by the succession of the bishops of Rome, was believed to constitute the very principle on which the church itself was supposed to rest.

And although the divines in question might not have said that visible union with this church was *all* that was necessary to salvation, yet undoubtedly they made this union so far necessary as to make it the foundation on which alone the superstructure could be reared. They did *not* say that all should be saved who were *in* the church, but they *did* say that *out* of the church there could be no salvation. Union with the church, therefore, considered as an external society, formed (not by *lineal*, as the Levitical priesthood, but) by *official* succession, they regarded as the first and most necessary requisite for securing eternal salvation. And their conduct was consistent with their opinions. They thought with Luther on the nature and condition of justification; but, by a strange confusion of mind, instead of carrying out the opinion to its proper consequences, they looked at another, and a very different one; and by the rules suggested by this, they chose to govern themselves.

The consequence might have been foreseen. The *practical* opinion became, ere long, not only the prevailing, but the exclusive one. At the Council of Trent these ecclesiastics endeavoured to make their voice heard, and to procure for the truth which they believed the solemn recognition of the church. But they had not the slightest measure of success. The Papists saw, intuitively, that with the doctrine of justification by faith, those which related to the church were utterly inconsistent; and as these latter were held even by the more evangelical members of the council, they were taken as proclaimed by the general voice; and then, this being assumed as truth, the other was declared to be error; and thus, whatever had remained

in the Roman Church of evangelical doctrine, as to the justification of the sinner before God, was totally and finally excluded. What Pole and his associates believed to be truth, was declared to be error, and anathematized as such. And if those views of ecclesiastical order in which all the adherents of the Papacy agreed were correct, the council was right. With those views, the doctrine of justification by faith is altogether incompatible; the majority of the members of the council, therefore, seeing this, and assuming the validity of their own principles, decided against it. They were clear-sighted enough to perceive that the Lutheran opinion of justification belonged to a system of religion very different from that which themselves had embraced, and that in putting down, ostensibly, a single doctrine, they were putting down a regular collection of principles and results. From that time, supposing the position occupied and defended by Luther to be correct, the Church of Rome has been not only unevangelical, but anti-evangelical. The truth which in Luther's judgment constituted the gospel is not only not tolerated, but condemned. The holders of justification by faith are anathematized; so that they who consistently follow out the teachings of the Papacy, as directed by the Council of Trent, adopt a rule utterly at variance with that laid down in what is believed to be the first written apostolical Epistle; and concerning which, the Spirit, by whom the author wrote, explicitly declares that its observance constitutes the living church of the Lord Christ,—“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

To this, therefore, did the efforts come of those who,



while they valued apostolical truth, made it subservient to ecclesiastical order and visible unity. What they believed to be true, the church declared to be false; and it was only by an indulgent connivance, which a zealous promulgation of their opinions would have forfeited, that they were not personally excommunicated.

Exactly opposite to this were the convictions of Luther, and the conduct to which they led. It was a governing principle with him that the truth of God must be not only maintained, but declared. Others regarded it as subordinate; he as supreme. His first obedience was due to it. Wherever it led, there was he to follow. Whatsoever disruptions it occasioned, to whatsoever perils it exposed, it was the pillar of the cloud on which his eye was fixed, and by the movements of which all his own were regulated.

And this supremacy of truth was not an arbitrary appointment, a capricious conception of his own, but was deeply founded in the essential nature of the gospel. Men are not saved merely as being integral members in that visible ecclesiastical corporation which is called the church. Whatever may be their other duties in relation to it, and by whatever rules they may be governed, union with it is not the immediate and proximate condition of salvation. The church, even in its spiritual character, and purest form, is not to be put in the place of Christ. "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." This is not merely *a* truth, but *the* truth. It is the substance of the gospel. "THIS is the record." And therefore it is not said, that he that hath the church, hath life; but "he that hath the Son." Every particular congregation of Christians ought to bear, as on a pillar, the in-

scription which directs men to Christ ; but that pillar is for the inscription, not the inscription for the pillar. And the inscription is not for ornament, but use. It is to tell men where and how they may be saved. The society which does not declare and support the truth, is not its pillar and ground ; and, therefore, not the church. In its best sense, it teaches the way to Christ ; but it is in an unrivalled sense that Christ says, " I am the way ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Men come to the Father that they may be saved ; saved with a present salvation : and this salvation is God's act, God's performance. Here, in fact, is the chain. It is God " that justifieth the ungodly." But for this, they must " call upon the name of the Lord." This is *coming unto God* ; and, to use the words of one of the standards of the Anglican Church, " the first coming unto God is through faith, whereby we be justified before God." Now, that we may thus come to " GOD IN CHRIST" for remission of sins, we must, to a certain extent, rightly believe concerning God, and his Son, and the prescribed method of human salvation. Doctrinal belief itself is not so much necessary for its own sake ; it is necessary that men may have the answer to the question, " What must I do to be saved ?" That they may be saved, they are to call on the name of the Lord ; that they may do this, they must properly believe concerning him ; and that they may properly believe the truth, the truth in its close connection with their personal salvation must be taught them.

Here was the difference between Luther and the Romanists : the latter said, in effect, (for to this did their doctrines of the sacraments and absolution practically come,) " God has committed to the church the

power of saving you. We minister life to you in one sacrament, and nourishment in another; and, if we judge well of your penitence, we absolve you from your trespasses. The church now does all these things in the name of Christ; and as representing Christ, and being, during his absence, in his room and stead; the church, therefore, is the way, the truth, and the life. The church saves all that dutifully conform themselves to its will." This was Romanism; and on these principles the knowledge of religious truth may certainly be taken as of very subordinate consequence. But in opposition to all this, Luther declared that God was Saviour; and that the office of the church was not to communicate salvation, but to show how men might receive it at the hands of God; that is, that the great duty of the church was to make known the truth; to say, with the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." At all hazards, therefore, did he resolve to spread what he believed to be the truth. And why? Not that he considered himself to have made discoveries by which his name might be immortalized; not that he might be regarded as the founder of a new school, and receive the homage of his disciples as its head. This, indeed, was often imputed to him by men who neither understood him nor the subjects which the controversy involved; but it is impossible to study the writings and history of Luther, and suppose that he was influenced by this desire of intellectual laudation and dominancy. He knew how to be submissive and yielding, and even tender; but it was always on the understanding that what he considered as *the gospel*, the gospel as described in the Epistle to the Galatians, and important for the reasons

assigned there,—that this gospel was untouched, unimpeded. The language of his preaching, of his writing, of his correspondence and conversation, was *all of a piece*. By this he explained his conduct; by this he justified it. In effect, his various declarations amounted to this: “We must teach men to know Christ, that by Christ they may be saved.” One key, therefore, to the exposition of Luther’s conduct and character is found in his unconquerable resolution to declare the truth according to Christ’s gospel; and this, because of his deep and settled conviction of the importance of that truth in all its references to the salvation of man.

If the views just now exhibited be at all correct; if it be so that truth and salvation are thus to be associated in our conceptions; then will it immediately follow, that so far is ignorance from being the mother, that she is the bane, of devotion; that a time of religious ignorance and error will be a time of relaxed morals, of spreading corruption, and at length of daring and abandoned impiety. If the *carnal mind* be *enmity against God*, (and this is the plain language of Scripture, admitted by both Romanist and Protestant,) and if it can only be subdued by the grace and truth of the gospel; then, whenever these remedies are sparingly and negligently administered, and even for the most part not administered at all, the disease will increase, till the symptoms, which mark its aggravated character and growing power, become overwhelmingly frightful. And this had long been the state of Christendom when Luther was born. The whole head was sick; the whole heart was faint. From the sole of the foot unto the head there was no soundness in it, but wounds,

and bruises, and putrefying sores : they had not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. The demoralization and corruption of society were at their height. Not only were the means of checking immorality not employed, but that which was originally designed to be the cure of all human disorders had become their great promoter. Ignorance and superstition had enslaved the people at large ; and in the higher circles of life vice had only become somewhat less brutal, and often more extensive by being more luxuriant. The bulk of the clergy were ignorant and depraved. The established and rigidly-enforced celibacy of the priestly order had produced the results that might have been anticipated. That the law of man might be observed, the law of God was violated ; and these violations met with general connivance. The foundations of morality were thus undermined, and the ligaments which bound society together were almost severed. Dark indeed was the age that immediately preceded the Reformation. Darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.

The popedom itself was regarded with a strange mixture of feeling. While the belief prevailed that the priestly act could communicate spiritual life and nourishment, it was not possible to regard the possessors of such power without awe. And when to this was added the supposed right to bind and loose, the awe at once sunk and expanded into terror. The more educated might sometimes despise what they wished to dare ; but unless they held in their hand a sword which even Rome cared not to brave, their contempt might not show itself in any overt act. The prince could not set at naught the terrors of the Papal

interdict, unless his subjects thought and felt with himself; and, in an age of ignorance and superstition, this was seldom likely to be the case. However, when pressed in argument, the priestly disputant might distinguish between the curse of the law and the censures of the church, the bulk of the people connected together the notions of *priestly absolution* and *divine pardon*.

But while the Papal power was feared, it was likewise despised. It had not virtue enough to make itself respected, and the circumstances of the Papacy, for several hundred years, had been such as to keep its vices full in public view. For ages the Papal throne had been filled by men whose characters only differed in the forms which their impiety assumed. By many of them even shame had been thrown away.

And, that all this might work out its own proper results, priestly ambition led to the Papal schism. For a long series of years there were two, sometimes three, popes; and however holy any one of them might be to those of his own "obedience," yet the rest—the only word that fitly describes the historical fact is—the rest were considered as *fair game* for invective.

But it was not invective only. Let the publications elicited by the Council of Constance be read; the council which, a hundred years before Luther, advised Sigismund to a breach of the public faith, burned John Huss and Jerome of Prague, and deposed three popes. Let all the invective and satire which political enmity might occasion be erased, and only the solemn language of private piety, or of public ecclesiastical censure, be retained as evidence, and enough will remain to show that the hierarchy was pressed down by its monstrous vices, and that the heads of the church were the heads

of its wickedness. And the council itself was the worthy representative of the morality of the day. John Huss and Jerome of Prague, men of irreproachable character, but reputed heresiarchs, they burned. John XXIII., a monster seldom equalled even in the Papacy, and scarcely surpassed by Alexander VI., the notorious Borgia, they dismissed to splendour, affluence, and a bishopric!

Nor was the succession materially altered in its character for the half century preceding the Reformation. Sixtus IV. (1471) became infamous by taking part in a conspiracy against the house of Medici, and by licensing houses of ill-fame at Rome, for the sake of revenue. Alexander VI., (1492,) as Borgia, has passed into a proverb; Julius, who preceded Leo, was an iron-handed political warrior; Leo himself an elegant, good-natured, and voluptuous infidel. And such as was the sovereign, such were the courtiers. Christianity appears to have existed at Rome as a cause committed to the professional care of certain advocates, and which they were bound, both in honour and by interest, professionally to maintain. But professional advocacy is consistent with a fearful quantity of actual unbelief. And this was plainly seen both in the Roman court and throughout Italy. A blind superstition and a semi-enlightened infidelity almost divided the country between them. When the splendid and munificent patronage of the Medici at Florence promoted the revival of classical literature, the philosophers and poets thought more of Plato and Cicero, than Paul, or Peter, or John. And whether Leo did or did not actually use the language which the often-repeated anecdote attributes to him, "How profitable to us is this

fable of Christ!" yet it is beyond all doubt that the expression would only have been in perfect keeping with all that is known of his principles and character.

Of the corruption of the Roman ecclesiastical court under the predecessor of Leo, Luther was permitted to be a witness. When he visited Rome, in 1510, on the business of his order, the see had not a more dutiful son than himself. Secession from the church, as he then regarded the church, was a thought which not his wildest dreams would have suggested. And even when he saw the desolating abominations, he saw not how they were to be removed. But he did see them. Julius himself, the successor of the holy apostles, (!! ) was a profane soldier; and throughout the city ignorance, profligacy, and a contempt for those very things of which the forms were so carefully preserved, were universally spread and manifested. When he said mass at Rome, as he was requested to do during his visit, he went through the service like a man who was in earnest, and was laughed at for his rustic sincerity. On one occasion, some other priests, likewise engaged in mass-reading, had read *seven* before he had finished his *one*. "Quick, quick," said one of them to him; "send our lady her son back again speedily." Nor were the higher ecclesiastics less corrupt than the inferior priesthood. At their tables they indulged in obscene jests and coarse buffoonery; and their sentiment on religion itself,—opinion it cannot be termed, they were not serious enough for deliberately-formed opinion,—but their sentiment on the subject is placed in broad day by the fact, which Luther has recorded, that they have boasted in his presence of what, according to their own profession, was the most awfully-sacri-



legious mockery of which men could be guilty. In the place of the usual sacramental words, they would use these: "*Panis es, et panis manebis: vinum es, et vinum manebis. Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain: wine thou art, and wine thou shalt remain.*" "Then," added they significantly, "we elevate the pyx, and all the people worship!" If they believed according to their profession, they were cold-blooded, intentional soul-murderers: and if they did not so believe,—as who can even fancy that they did?—there is no language that can sufficiently describe their disgusting hypocrisy.

But what must have been the state of that ecclesiastical corporation to whose head could be applied the epigram:—

"Vendit Alexander claves, altaria, Christum;  
Vendere jure potest, emerat ipse prius."

"The pope sells altars, Christ, and keys,  
And thus to sell he ought;  
Of right he sells as he may please,  
What first of all he bought."

And thus was the whole Roman Church overspread and steeped with simony, infidelity, and imposture; with ignorance, superstition, and immorality. The form of godliness might be there, though even this was disfigured with rites and ceremonies borrowed from heathenism, and from the abrogated Levitical law of the Jews; but the power was more than absent,—it was denied. The two great marks of the predicted apostacy were therefore now furnished by what was called the Roman Church. The man of sin was found sitting as God, in the temple of God; and religion

consisted in the form of godliness retained, while its power was denied.

In such a state, the professing church was neither the light of the world, nor the salt of the earth. Reformation, therefore, was necessary.

But how was it to be accomplished? Up to the time of Luther, all attempts had failed. The Council of Constance had, indeed, asserted the subordination of the pope; but when the great schism had ceased, and the undisputed possessor of the Roman chair had leisure once more to direct his attention to the aggrandizement of his see, Papal policy gradually prevailed against what was regarded as conciliar usurpation; and Papal power, with all its pretended reverence for antiquity, refused, practically, the restraints of the ancient discipline, as interfering with the free exercise of its universal authority.

No wonder that all former attempts had failed. They left the source of the evil not only untouched, but uninfluenced and dominant.

Two facts must never be overlooked in this case. First, All the practical evil there is in the world comes from the original evil of man's fallen nature: and, second, All the practical good there is in the world proceeds from the grace of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. As in the human body, while alive, the laws of life counteract, in many most important instances, those physical laws to which it would otherwise be subject; so in the professing church,—its practical holiness will be in proportion to the extent and strength of its spiritual life. When the powers of life in the body are in a state of extreme languor and decline, the tendency of physical laws to exert

their natural power is plainly perceptible; and when life departs, the restraining counteracting power is removed, and the body follows the ordinary tendencies of matter. Thus is it in the church. When its spirituality decays, its power of resisting inward and outward evil proportionably diminishes. The abuses in the Roman Church, of which all Europe justly complained, resulted from the loss of spirituality. Men were not taught the true way of salvation; they therefore did not seek for it. It was impossible, "the world," "the flesh," and "the devil," being what they are, but that in such a state of things dissoluteness of manners should prevail and increase. And the cure could only be effectual which went directly to that in which the disease originated. New laws, prohibiting abuses, however minute and stringent, would have done little even in their first and compulsory enactment; and they would soon have been swept away, either by evasion or direct repeal.

Among the remarkable circumstances of the Lutheran Reformation, one of the most remarkable is, that no reforming intention, properly so called, is to be found in its first movements. There is a mistaken philosophy which seems perpetually occupied in preventing its scholars from referring to God in any other character than that of a metaphysical abstraction, having no appreciable value in moral calculations; which, on this particular subject, vaguely speaks of Luther as being produced by the spirit of the age. All this is pure hypothesis. It is unsupported by a single fact. Luther was not a man of the world. He was no politician. To those abuses which, subsequently, the German Diets presented as nuisances which required abate-

ment, he does not appear, even when he began to act as a reformer, to have directed his attention at all.

The truth is, that the Lutheran Reformation can only then be understood when the Christian doctrines of providence, and the spiritual reign of the Lord Jesus Christ in his church, are recollected, and their principles distinctly, and most decisively and firmly, applied. It was a revival of religion, effected by the direct interference of God himself. It is not true that all *direct* interference is *miraculous*. Miraculous interposition sets aside or controls nature ; but there is an interposition not less direct, which works along with nature, and by means of it. Such an interposition is evidently supposed by the important maxim of the administration of the divine government, which is given by the prophet Isaiah, chap. lix, 19, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." And this lifting up of the standard, to which all the loyal would flock, is connected with a remarkable promise of the Redeemer's presence in his church ; a *spiritual* presence, of course, and manifested by its fruits of peace, and joy, and righteousness : "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and *unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob,*" verse 20. Compare this with the solemn language of Christ himself, John xiv, 21, 23, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." This is the spiritual presence of Christ in his church ; and it was

by this that Luther was shown to have been God's honoured instrument of reclaiming the wanderer to the true fold.

Luther is not to be regarded as concentrating in himself the spirit of the age, and acting accordingly. He cannot be understood,—in fact, he is not understood,—either in his character or conduct, except by those who view him, with all his subordinate errors and imperfections, as a spiritual Christian, and as God's instrument for checking the progress of the enemy, and rolling back the tide of error and sin. Luther did *not* begin by complaining of the ignorance that prevailed; nor of the bondage in which men were held. He did *not* begin by asserting the true rights of conscience; no, nor even by proclaiming the supremacy of God's word, and vindicating the sacred privilege of perusing the Scriptures against all opposers. He had himself been brought to understand, and personally to enjoy, the essential principle of religion, *subjectively considered*. He had felt the accusations of conscience, as instructed by the holy law of God. He had sought for peace in the religious practice of the day, and he had sought for it in vain. At length, he was shown that religion for fallen man was founded in "salvation;" and that the gate of salvation was "the remission of sins," or justification. This justification he saw, from the Scriptures, and especially from the writings of St. Paul, to be attainable by faith alone; a relying, appropriating, spiritual faith, fixing directly on the blood of Christ, acknowledging that we are saved most freely by the grace of God, and rejoicing in the efficiency and fullness of the grace which saves. This faith Luther had exercised, and its blessed fruits he had himself expe-

rienced. He knew what it was to be justified by faith, and to have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And here was his preparation for the work in which he was afterward called to engage. Dr. Robertson most strangely misrepresents the obvious facts of the case, when he represents Luther as beginning by opposing the sale of indulgences, and as being led, by the studies which he found necessary for the successful prosecution of his task, to examine the subject of justification. Exactly the reverse is the fact; the fact testified by the clearest declarations of his personal history. He studied the question of justification *first*. And he studied it not as a scholastic subject, but as being most intimately connected with personal obligations and privileges. He not only *studied* it, as a truth which the Scriptures teach; but he *experienced* it, as a blessing which the Scriptures promise.

And thus was Luther prepared in his cell for the work he had to do in the world, by the Spirit of God blessing his devout perusal of Scripture, his earnest prayers, his deep and penitential sorrow of spirit, and his conversation with his religious friends. And thus, too, did the Spirit of God lift up the standard against the enemy. Understanding the true doctrines of repentance and faith, he saw the practical mischief of indulgences, as they were then hawked about, and puffed, and sold by the Papal emissaries. At first he saw no further, and went no further. But his opponents compelled him to advance, however reluctant. He had thus to examine the whole question; and then its supports; and so on, till the whole scheme of Papalism was before him. He *set out* with the doctrine of justi-

fication by faith, regarded as the very gate of salvation, as leading to all spiritual happiness and holiness. He knew he was *thus far right*, and he worked his way by careful, honest, and prayerful inquiry; using in that inquiry all proper human helps, and valuing them in proportion as he found them more and more free from the taintings of the mystery of iniquity: but he rested in the Bible alone. "This," he said, "is the true antiquity. It is here that God speaks." Like the other reformers, he knew the value of the early fathers, and was able to make good use of them, both in study and controversy; but as the standard of religious belief, to which even that which the fathers say must be referred, "THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE ALONE, WAS THE RELIGION" OF LUTHER.

This, then, is the light in which we view the Lutheran Reformation. We see in it a remarkable illustration of the rule of the divine government quoted above. The enemy had come in as a flood, and the deluge seemed likely to be universal. Human embankments were all swept away by it. The means by which it was sought to impede its progress, only occasioned its waves to rise the higher, and gather weight and force, till these new obstructions shared the fate of all former ones. Everything tended to the aggrandizement of Rome, till Luther brought the doctrine of justification by faith to bear upon the question of indulgences. And as the same spear that detected the audacious fiend, seeking to hide himself in the squalid reptile, compelled him, when revealed, to give way; so did the power of this doctrine drive back the evils whose proper character it had so completely exposed. The Spirit of the Lord had now lifted up the standard,

and the tokens of the Redeemer's gracious presence in his church began to be experienced. The raging of the enemy, too, proved that he felt the efficiency of the check now opposed to his further progress. In all ages the faithful administration of the true gospel of Jesus Christ has been God's great instrument in the revival of his work, when, by the sinful carelessness of men, it has been suffered to fall into a state of inactivity and decay.

It is of the highest importance that the proper character of the Reformation, as being originally a revival of spiritual religion, effected by the faithful announcement of evangelical truth, be distinctly understood. It is true, that as many of the grievances fastened on Germany by the Roman usurpation were of a political nature, and therefore felt in all their weight by the various governments of the empire, so it was to be expected that its different princes would gladly avail themselves of the first outbreak of opposition, that their own demand for redress might be strengthened. Mixed up, therefore, with the early Reformation, and not unfrequently modifying its character, and influencing its direction, we may expect to find worldly considerations and political movements. These, however, rather accompanied, than constituted, the Reformation. The Reformation itself was begun by a spiritual man, acting upon spiritual principles, and aiming at spiritual objects. Luther was not a worldly politician, but a true Christian. It is impossible to read his writings, and study his history, provided the nature of spiritual religion be itself understood, without seeing that he earnestly desired the promotion of religion in the world; not only as believing that thus would the social welfare of men



be advanced, but (and this was his chief object) that their spiritual and eternal salvation might be secured. Political consequences of great importance have doubtless resulted from the movements of Luther; but it was not for political results that he laboured. If ever man felt himself to be a minister of Jesus Christ, bound to a faithful delivery of the divine message, whoever might be pleased, whoever displeased, Martin Luther was that man. He felt himself to be providentially called to expose abuses by which the name of Christ was dishonoured, and the eternal interests of men put in jeopardy. These abuses he took care to describe according to what he knew was their actual character and tendency. He could not talk of the innocency of errors that imperilled souls. He could not deal with bold hypocrisy as a mere mistake of the judgment. And he was the more decided in his movements, and the bolder in his expressions, for that he felt that any mistakes he might make would be practically neutralized by the caution and forbearance of his coadjutor and friend, Philip Melancthon. Luther was not the passionate, worldly, disputing politician, mixing theology with his polemical engagements. That occasionally his earnestness made him harsh, and, for the time, overbearing, may as easily be admitted, as that the caution and forbearance of Melancthon exposed him to the attacks of timidity and cowardice. But these occasional outbreaks show rather the man's natural temperament than his actual and Christian character. Besides, the customs of the age allowed a far greater latitude in controversial language than is conceded by the rules of modern debate. Harshness of polemic expression does not always indicate harsh-

ness of temper ; nor does even an occasional outbreak of passion (most mourned, perhaps, by the individual himself) prove that resentment and anger are the prevailing dispositions of the mind. Luther himself was a Christian man ; and the work in which he engaged was, so far as himself and his immediate associates were engaged, a Christian work.

Laying on one side, therefore, the secondary and political results of the Reformation, as being—though they present a magnificent subject of contemplation\*—foreign to the present inquiry ; and likewise laying on one side what may be termed the political adjuncts of the Reformation ; against many of which Luther contended, and to all of which he sought to give as far as possible a truly spiritual character ; looking at the work itself, in its origin and in its objects, we again call it a revival of spiritual religion, effected by the faithful enunciation of divine truth.

The history of Luther, we think, can scarcely be studied without a clear perception of the fact that, by his means, there was a broad distinction made between what may be termed *the religion of externalism*, and *the religion of spirituality*. When the English reformers began to advance the doctrine of justification by faith, their Romanist adversaries replied, that, even if it were true, it was needless to preach it in England, for that all the people there had already been justified in their baptism. Justification was thus described as a general blessing, the actual possession of which was ministered by baptism. This was—and indeed still

\* Viller's " Essay on the Spirit and Influence of the Reformation of Luther " should be studied on this particular branch of the subject.

is—the essence of Popery, the supposed admission to spiritual blessings by the performance of external rites. Whereas the reformers everywhere went forth, not undervaluing the sacraments of Christ's ordination; making them, in fact, all the more venerable, by restoring them to their original number and position; but these holy men everywhere went forth preaching that justification consisted in the forgiveness of sins; that this was to be received by faith in Christ; that this faith did not consist in the mere belief of Christian doctrines, however correct and extensive it might be, but in appropriation and reliance, its object being the infinitely-meritorious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Religion, in a word, as taught by them, was personal and spiritual; its distinctive sign being justification by faith alone.

If, then, the Reformation which began by the preaching of Luther has been a blessing to the world, the only way to preserve the blessing, and to render it more complete and extensive, is by the faithful maintenance, and energetic delivery, of its grand principle, and characteristic sign,—justification by faith. Unless the standard be kept lifted up, the ebbing tide will turn once more. The doctrines of Tridentine Popery, and the doctrines necessarily connected with the primary one of personal justification by faith, can never coalesce. They belong to totally different schemes of religion; and one of them must be false. One of them must inevitably be ANOTHER GOSPEL. True Protestants who understand the nature of the system revived by Luther, see in it that gospel which St. Paul preached, and concerning which he said, “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

And seeing this, they will likewise see that thus only can Protestantism itself be preserved, thus only can its blessings be extended ; even by this same clear and impressive statement of the distinguishing truths of the gospel. The holy law of God must be preached, that men may see they need salvation, and that they cannot save themselves. And then, after the example of Luther, there must be a faithful, that is, a clear and an earnest, declaration of the gospel ; namely, the offer of pardon, and peace, and spiritual influence, in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, to be received by a living, spiritual faith in his all-atoning merits. Let all Protestant pulpits be characterized by the faithful ministrations of their occupants. Let justification by faith, and all that it implies, be powerfully and consistently proclaimed ; and though of late the enemy has been loud in his vauntings, and (if he is to be believed) is again advancing as a flood, let but the pulpits of the land resound with the old Protestant preaching of that wholesome and most comfortable doctrine of justification by faith only, and, even were their boastings true, all occasion for them would rapidly vanish. Let the standard be lifted up, and the enemy shall be driven back. Popery never dares trust herself to the combat when she can avoid it. The opposing doctrine is never allowed in Papal countries the liberty which Papal demagogues demand in Protestant countries. We repeat it, let the standard be lifted up, and the enemy shall be driven back. Popery can never prevail, unless Protestantism become unfaithful and inert.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IF we were required to select a period in the modern history of Europe in which the wise and beneficent providence of the Almighty might be thought to have been most conspicuously manifested, in bending to its own will the tendencies of human action, and causing "all things to work together" for the preparation and unfolding of a great moral revolution in the condition of the world, we should probably fix upon that lapse of time which extended from the latter part of the eleventh to the sixteenth century. It is, indeed, a matter of peculiar and delightful interest to observe how, during that period, events which, to mere human foresight, would seem to have promised the most opposite results, were surely, though insensibly, undermining the strength of that vast system of spiritual tyranny and falsehood which imprisoned and oppressed the moral reason of men, and laying the foundations of a Reformation, the magnitude and immortal value of whose consequences can never be fully appreciated on this side of the grave.

When the celebrated Peter the Hermit travelled the countries of Europe, inviting monarchs and their iron-clad subjects to league themselves in a frantic expedition for the recovery of the holy sepulchre,—holding out to them, as a chief inducement, the promise of pardon for past, and impunity for future, sins,—who could

have seen, in the insane fanaticism, the ferocious zeal and arrogant pretensions of that crazy enthusiast, the germ of an evil that was to smite the fabric of corruption out of which it sprang? who could have then anticipated the growth of a practice which was destined, by awakening the indignant resistance and holy scorn of a great and noble spirit, instrumentally to subserve the highest interests of humanity; to shake the throne of the oppressor; to break the spell of a corrupt ecclesiastical domination; and to rescue the word of God itself from that oblivion to which it had been long and basely consigned?

Of indulgences, the sale of which was the proximate occasion of the dispute between Luther and the Roman Church, we find no record prior to the pontificate of Gregory III. By that pope, as by Victor and Urban II., they would appear to have been originally and exclusively used for the purpose which we have indicated; namely, that of exciting the superstitious chivalry of the age to embark in that series of splendid absurdities, (from which nevertheless so many mighty consequences issued,) which are known to history by the name of the Crusades. Pope Clement XII., however, finding how largely advantageous to the consolidation and maintenance of the Papal power this monstrous invention might be rendered, extended the granting of indulgences to all persons who assisted to extirpate heretics; thus setting a premium upon the indiscriminate murder of dissentients from the Roman creed and ritual! It is easy to perceive how the use of auricular confession, and priestly absolution, led the way to this wilder blasphemy and ampler usurpation. The assumption, by the church, of the divine prerogative, to forgive sins, and

the general submission of the ignorant and rude warriors of the middle ages to that impious assumption, naturally enough suggested to a crafty and ambitious hierarchy the wider purposes of aggrandizement, to which the authority, so audaciously usurped, might be applied. As a source of revenue, indeed, nothing could have been contrived better adapted to yield an inexhaustible fund to the exchequer of the Vatican. Of all the articles that financial ingenuity ever imagined to tax, none so fruitful as vice can be conceived. And when we recollect how utterly the popular judgment, throughout Europe, had succumbed to the fiction of the divine right and consequent infallibility of the head of the Roman Church, we cease to be astonished at the insolent impiety of the pontiffs, who, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had recourse to such flagitious and profligate means of raising money for the erection of that matchless cathedral at Rome, which is not more a prodigy of art, and a stupendous token of the genius of its architects and decorators, than it is a monument of the profound depravity, darkness, and credulous superstition of the whole European community, and a record of the revival of pure and unadulterated Christianity.

Julius II., in whose reign, as pope, (1503–1513,) was commenced the building of St. Peter's, issued indulgences to all persons who should contribute toward the expenses of that marvellous structure. The ordinary revenues of the Papacy, enormous as they were could hardly have sufficed, in many years, for the completion of so vast and gorgeous an edifice. But when to Julius, himself a liberal encourager of the fine arts, succeeded (1513) the luxurious and princely Leo X.,

the superb prodigality and ostentatious magnificence with which it was his delight to surround himself, rendered more urgent the demand for extraordinary supplies, to meet the prodigious expenditure required for the completion of the cathedral. Accordingly, in the year 1517, Leo, following up the project of his predecessor, sent forth a bull, offering to every one who would purchase, at the appointed price, indulgences, which assumed not only to remit past transgressions, but to give license for future immoralities.\*

The personal character of this pope has been, in a great measure, rescued from the infamy that justly attaches to it, by the kind of halo which their munificent patronage of letters and the arts has thrown around the names of the whole family of the Medici. With all the eminent powers of intellect, and the fine taste, which he undoubtedly possessed, he seems to have been little better than a refined sensualist—a life-long reveller in a species of magnificent voluptuousness, which was only redeemed from utter brutality and

\* In the "Tax-Book of the Holy Apostolic Church," published at Rome, in 1514, the authorship of which is imputed to Pope Innocent III., the following rates of charge for various offences are specified:—For fornication, if attended with circumstances of aggravation, six groats: for incest, five groats: for a priest keeping a concubine, seven groats: for a layman committing murder, five groats: for laying violent hands on a priest, nine groats: for counterfeiting the pope's hand-writing, seventeen or eighteen groats. Setting aside the iniquity of the whole system of indulgence for any species of crime, the ethical scale, which considers incest and murder as crimes of less weight than forgery of the pontiff's name, or personal maltreatment of a priest, may serve to give us some idea of the execrable morality of the Vatican.



grossness by a large and bright imagination. That he was selfish, profligate, and addicted to scandalous impurities of life, is undeniable ; and while we agree with his English historian in acquitting him of deliberate and sordid avarice, and of the malversation which has been charged upon him, of the pontifical revenues, we are persuaded, from the whole tenor of his public and private conduct, his reckless disregard of all forms and semblance of ecclesiastical propriety and decency in the selection of the individuals whom he appointed to dispose of the indulgences, and his subsequent indifference, until indifference could no longer be affected, to the proceedings, arguments, and protestations of Luther, that he was, in his heart, without doubt, as were many of his contemporaries in the priesthood, a thorough unbeliever, not only in the peculiar and absurd dogmas of his own church, but in many, if not all, of the cardinal truths of the Christian religion.

This man it was, who, having promulgated his bull for the unlimited sale of indulgences, with a singular and unaccountable fatuity, devolved the conduct of that unhallowed traffic upon some of the most abandoned, ignorant, and worthless persons that ever dishonoured the cowl and tonsure. As a matter of mere policy, this was a gross and flagrant error ; for the passage of the rescripts of pardon through such hands could not fail to derogate from the popular opinion of their worth, and weaken the respect in which their author, by reason of his office, was generally held. But when such men as Tetzels and Arcumboldo were put forward as the disposers and champions of the indulgences, challenging for them a prospective efficacy, which the pope, in his brief, had not ventured to claim, and alleging

that they would avail to protect their purchasers from the penalty of crimes, the very mention of which must have outraged every honest and undoubting Romanist, it necessarily happened that those who entertained misgivings as to the real existence of a right in the sovereign pontiff to grant such dispensations, were driven to fortify their previous suspicions, to look narrowly at the grounds on which the exorbitant pretensions of the indulgence-mongers rested, and in the end to discover their total futility and contrarience to reason and to revelation.

Such was the effect of this revolting farce, this hideous imposture, upon the mind of Luther. Previously aware, as we shall see hereafter, of the fearful omissions and concealment of great part of the whole truth of God which obtained in the Romish Church, he was thus brought into immediate collision with one of the most tremendous of the unwarranted additions which that church had dared to append to the revealed expression of his will. By a singular providence, one of those remarkable arrangements for which the whole world, through all time, and beyond all time, will have reason to be deeply thankful, he had been guided to a convent, where he had access to a solitary copy, in Latin, of the Bible. To the arbitration of that Bible did he, in a devout and fervent spirit, submit the entire subject of dispute; and the issue was—the REFORMATION.

THE  
LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER

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CHAPTER I.

THE precise date of the great reformer's birth was, during his lifetime, and for some years after his decease, frequently brought into question. Some of his enemies betook themselves to astrological calculations, for the purpose of showing that certain portentous aspects of the heavenly bodies had given warning of the advent of the great heresiarch, as he was styled; and when it was found that this curious sort of *ex post facto* evidence of his iniquity, deduced from a foregone and dubious prophecy, was not quite borne out by the actual position of the stars on the true day of his entrance into the world, two of these sapient astrologers, Jerome Cardan and Florimond de Redmond, were pleased to dispense with fact altogether, and to fix the commencement of his "lease of life" upon the 22d of October, 1483; for no other reason than that they were thus enabled to bring his nativity under the dire combination, in which they affected to read a premonition of his infamy and wickedness. Another writer, and a Romish prelate, Gauricus by name, subtracts a whole year, and maintains that Luther's birth occurred in

October, 1484. "Five planets," says this author, "being in conjunction under Scorpio, in the ninth station, which was by the Arabians allotted to religion, made him a sacrilegious and profane heretic. From the direction of the horoscope toward the conjunction of Mars, he died without religion. His most impious soul sailed away to hell, to be there eternally tormented with fiery whips by Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megæra."\* Of the last-mentioned and not very amiable lady, indeed, one of his monkish calumniators makes him out to have been the son; alleging that "*he was born of Megæra, one of the Furies, and sent from hell into Germany.*"†

From these ridiculous figments, which would else be too trivial to be worth noticing, we may form some conception of the strange jumble of barbarous and pagan legends which, having formed the basis of all the doctrinal errors of their faith, had come, in process of time, to be intimately mixed up with the prevalent and contemptible theology of the Romish clergy; as well as of the impotent and imbecile malignity with which they sought to inflame the public mind against the man who had torn the veil from some of their most odious impositions, and exposed the hollowness of their impudent and tyrannical pretensions.

It was on the 10th day of November, 1483, that MARTIN LUTHER first saw the light, at the small town of Eisleben, in the county of Mansfeldt, in Upper Saxony. His father, John Luther, Lutter, or Luder, and Margaret Linderman, his mother, were both of

\* Lucus Gauricus, in *Tractatu Astrologico*, &c., fol. 60

† Cajetanus, *Hirud.*, lib. i.

them natives of the same district. They resided in the inconsiderable village of Meza, distant only a few miles from the place of the reformer's birth. To that place his mother, who, according to the very general custom of her country, eked out the scanty resources of her family by personal labour in the fields, had repaired, in order to be present at an annual fair, when she was seized with the pains of premature labour, and gave birth to her child in a house which a few years afterward was burnt to the ground. Subsequently it was rebuilt at the expense of the town, and is at present converted into a public school, to which is appended an institution for the relief and maintenance of the poor.

The father of Luther was employed as a workman in the mines, which abound in his native province; an occupation of the humblest rank, and yielding in those days only a miserable pittance as the reward of severe toil. But, poor as were Luther's parents, they, with a laudable ambition which has never been rare in Germany, determined to procure for him the best education within their reach. With this view, they placed him under the care of one George Æmilius, of whom little is known, except that he was a respectable scholar, and an ecclesiastic. Some rudimental instruction Luther would appear to have received under the domestic roof; where, we are told, he so far profited by the exemplary piety and general conduct of his nearest relatives, as to evince, from a very early age, tokens of a disposition as remarkable for its conscientious and unusual seriousness, as were his aptitude and diligence for the native vigour of understanding which they disclosed. His first regular preceptor, however,

was Æmilius, who, if we may judge from the subsequent and rapid progress of his illustrious pupil in every branch of learning, must have discharged his duty with ability and zeal. At the age of fourteen Luther was removed to a public school at Magdeburg, in which, conformably to a usage which has commonly obtained among students of all classes in various parts of Germany, he supported himself for upward of fifteen months by literal begging. At the close of that term he was transferred to a larger, and somewhat celebrated, establishment, at Eisenach, in Thuringia. There he remained for four years, subsisting and defraying the expenses incident to the prosecution of his studies by the eleemosynary assistance of the inhabitants. "Let no one," he says, in reference to this portion of his history, "let no one in my presence despise those poor people who go from door to door, saying, 'Bread, for the sake of God!' (*Panem, propter Deum!*) for I myself have been a poor mendicant, and have received bread at the doors of many a house, especially in Eisenach, the town of my lore." On these occasions, when pressed with hunger, he would join some of his fellow-scholars in singing in the streets to obtain a morsel of bread. His voice was good, and he was strongly attached to music; so that, with his companions, he not unfrequently furnished a pleasing street-concert; but, in return, he often received only harsh words. Once, in particular, he had been repulsed from three houses, and was about to return fasting to his lodging, when he was noticed by a pious woman, named Ursula, the wife of Conrad Cotta, a burgher of the place. He was himself fearing that he should have to renounce his studies, and go to work with his father

in the mines of Mansfeldt: but this good woman pitied his forlorn appearance, and not only relieved his present wants, but, having introduced him to her husband, the honest burgher was so much pleased with him, that in a few days afterward he took him to live in his house.

He now enjoyed a much more tranquil life. Freed from the painful pressure of want, he pursued his studies with increased ardour; and by seeing the hand of a kind and watchful providence, his confidence in God was strengthened, and his love for prayer increased. He likewise learned to play on the flute, and on the lute; and as his adoptive mother was very fond of music, he thus endeavoured to minister to her gratification who had ministered to his wants. Indeed, to his old age his love for music continued; and some of the best of the old German hymns, together with their tunes, were composed by him.

In 1501, having achieved considerable distinction by his acquisitions in all the customary departments of letters and science, Luther, being then in his eighteenth year, entered himself of the University of Erfurt, a city of great antiquity, and no small importance, in the Thuringian province. This university, which had been founded rather more than a hundred years before, having been favoured with the special countenance of the princely houses of Brunswick and Saxony, which successively claimed the sovereignty of Thuringia after the decadence of its native landgraves, had attained to an eminent reputation among the great schools of central Europe. Devoting himself with characteristic energy to his studies, the future reformer very soon rose into collegiate distinction as one of the most

accomplished scholars of the day. "The whole university," says Melancthon, "admired his genius." The arbitrary and strange collection of antiquated notions and laborious technicalities which the schoolmen, in their blind servility to the opinions of Aristotle, had dignified with the comprehensive name of philosophy, had, as may easily be supposed, but small charms for so masculine an intellect as was that of Luther. That he did not utterly neglect to cultivate a familiarity with the formal rules, the solemn phantasies, and elaborate pedantry of this mass of superannuated errors, is evident from the whole style and quality of his writings. And, indeed, we may observe, in passing, that with all its fallacies and crude imaginations, its radical hostility to the true spirit and method of philosophical induction, the scholastic system had, at least, the advantage of trying the strength of the faculties, and reducing them into habitual subjection to a discipline that was beneficial in proportion to its stringency. Not only did it minister to the development and ripening of the logical understanding, but it also induced a certain dialectic skill, an agility of mind, an artificial keenness of discrimination, and a nicety of fence, which were of singular value in the conduct of all subtle discussions. In these respects, which, in truth, were the only reclaiming virtues of the Aristotelian philosophy under its monastic gloss, few men more amply profited by an acquaintance with the formularies of that fanciful philosophy than did Luther. He gathered from them his best weapon in the great contest which was coming: that power of close, shrewd, clear, and pungent argumentation, and that home-thrust of a fatal proof, which left his antagonist no chance of evasion or escape;



while to the hearts and consciences of others it carried conviction with the celerity and sureness of an electric shock.

It is by no means easy to account for the extraordinary reverence in which the dreaming and baseless theories of the Stagyrte were held by the ecclesiastical authorities of the middle ages. That this reverence must have flowed, collaterally, from the same causes which had mingled so much of mythological fiction with the tenets of the Church of Rome, is, perhaps, the best proximate solution we can arrive at. But that the absurd figments of Aristotle,—such, for example, as that, for doubting which, Galileo, a century later than the time of Luther, was twice imprisoned; namely, that the heavens were as brass, and the stars set in them as diamonds,—that such follies should have been dealt with as things of equal sacredness with the most solemn declarations of holy writ, relative to the being and character of the Deity, and the means of human salvation, must be regarded as another and melancholy illustration of the depth of moral darkness and abasement into which that corrupt church had lapsed. To quarrel with any of the physical doctrines of Aristotle, or dispute the soundness of his ethics, was to incur the reproach of heresy; and while the Scriptures were, even to the great body of the monastic clergy themselves, a sealed and unknown book, a man's eternal safety was represented to depend upon his faith in the most trivial and transparent blunders of an illustrious heathen speculator. The great Lord Bacon has well said, in a passage which may be used as a fine retort of the imputation of this sort of bastard and constrictive heresy: "So much the more does this vanity

require to be curbed and reprehended, because out of the unsound admixture of human with divine things is brought forth not only a fantastical philosophy, but also a *heretical religion*.”\*

Consistently with this exorbitant estimation of the works of Aristotle, the general course of reading for students in theology was mainly confined to the writings of Thomas Aquinas, which affected to treat of the capital truths of religion in due form of logic, and thus to press into the service of the altar the entities and definitions of the Stagyrite. Disgusted with the technical jargon and unprofitable subtleties which overlaid the cramped and barren divinity of Aquinas, Luther's favourite employment, during the two years of his residence at Erfurt, was the study of the fathers and the early history of the church, together with the principal classical authors, as Cicero and Virgil. But he was not a mere scholar. According to the light he possessed, he saw the need of divine assistance, and connected his studies with his devotions. He began the day with prayer; he then went to an early service at the church, and returned home to pursue his scholastic career.

While he was thus diligently seeking the acquisition of knowledge, one of those circumstances occurred which, apparently accidental and even trivial, yet lead to a long train of important consequences. Amidst all the studies of the young scholar, there was one on which he had not yet entered, but in which he was one

\* “Tanto magis hæc vanitas inhibenda venit, et coercenda, quia, ex divinorum et humanorum, malesanâ admixtione, non solum educitur philosophia phantastica, sed etiam religio hæretica.”—*Nov. Org.*

day to excel. On one occasion, when he had been about two years at Erfurt, and was in his twentieth year, being in the library of the college, and opening the books there one after the other in order to read the names of the authors, he opened a Latin work which he had never before seen. It was the Bible. He was astonished to find that the passages which were read to the people on Sundays and saints' days were but the fragments of a great whole. He read with eager attention; and frequently returned afterward to what was to him a most delightful employment, earnestly desiring to possess such a work for himself. Little did he at that time think that from him was Germany soon to receive that book as a gift for all her children. In this same year (1503) he took his first academical degree. But at one time it appeared as though his health were to be the price of his success in study. He had a serious fit of illness, chiefly, it should seem, of a nervous character, and in all probability produced by the excessive labour he had undergone in preparing for his examinations. He received much benefit from a visit paid him by an aged priest, who cheered his spirits, and said to him, "Take courage: you will not die this time. God will make you one who shall comfort many others. He lays his cross upon those whom he loves; and they who bear it patiently gain much wisdom."

In 1505 he was made master of arts. The ceremony was performed, according to custom, with very great pomp. There was a procession with torches, and a magnificent festival. And when all this was over, it became necessary for him to decide as to what profession he would embrace, as the means of supporting himself. After consulting with his friends, his

choice fell upon the civil law, which, in those days, afforded to young men of ardour and ability, whose birth was humble, the best, indeed the only, prospect of raising themselves to public distinction. This was not, however, the path by which he was to pass through life. A young man, with whom he had been very intimate, was assassinated. The sudden death of his friend very seriously affected his own mind. He thought of death and judgment, and was filled with painful apprehension. His conscience was not at rest. Soon after he visited his father at Mansfeldt ; and, on his return to Erfurt, was overtaken by a violent storm. A thunderbolt struck the earth almost by his side. He thought the hour of his death was come, and he felt that to the fear of death he was in bondage. Risen from the earth, he solemnly determined henceforward to seek after holiness as eagerly as hitherto he had pursued knowledge ; and to do this, he resolved to embrace the monastic life, that by the strict performance of religious duties he might obtain peace of conscience, and secure the salvation of his soul. On the 17th of August, 1505, therefore, he entered the convent of the hermits of St. Augustine, at Wittenberg, in Saxony ; a place which his memory has endeared to the thoughts of every devout Protestant in the world.

For nearly two years Luther continued in the convent before he was ordained priest ; and these, perhaps, were the most eventful years of his life. He submitted to all the self-abasing duties which his situation exacted from him : he devoted to study as much time as he could command for the purpose ; reading the more pious among the schoolmen, giving much attention to the fathers, especially Augustine, and, as there was a

copy of the Bible in his convent, diligently pursuing the inquiries which his first perusal of the word of God at Erfurt had suggested.

In addition to these occupations of his time, he devoted much of it to religious duties, and practised the ordinary austerities to an extraordinary degree. He contented himself with the poorest food, and would sometimes go three or four days together without eating or drinking. His great object was, by these outward works, completely to subdue and eradicate all inward evil, and to procure a settled peace of conscience. He himself said, at a subsequent period, "If ever a monk entered into heaven by his monkish merits, certainly I should have obtained an entrance there. All the monks who knew me will confirm this; and if it had lasted much longer, I should have become literally a martyr, through watchings, prayer, reading, and other labours."

But with all his studies, labours, and austerities, he was wretched. His conscience became more and more enlightened by the word of God. He saw no righteousness in himself, neither without nor within. He regarded the least sin as a crime; and no sooner had he detected it, than he laboured to expiate it by the strictest self-denial. He thus gradually discovered that all merely human efforts were unavailing. "I tormented myself to death," he said subsequently, "to procure peace for my conscience in the sight of God; but, encompassed about with thick darkness, no peace could I find." Sometimes his meditations on the divine justice and wrath awakened such terrors in him, that his bodily powers failed him, and he sometimes lay motionless, as if dead. He was indeed found one day

on the floor of his cell, without any signs of life. These sufferings led him to study the Scriptures yet more earnestly, if by any means his fears and pains might be removed.

The vicar-general of the Augustines for all Germany was John Staupitz, a man not only of learning, but of piety. He had passed through struggles similar to those which now harassed Luther, and in the Scriptures of the New Testament he had been enabled to find the true way of peace. He was, however, a man of much gentleness and indecision ; and one who, though he wished that things had been in a better state, was not willing to take any steps toward their amendment. Visiting the convent, he was told of the young monk, whom he called before him, and obtained from him an account of his state. In the course of the conversation, Luther said, "It is in vain that I make promises to God : sin is always too strong for me." He had obtained light ; but he had as yet neither peace nor power. Staupitz told him the only way. "Look," said he, "to the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood which he has shed for you : it is there you will see the mercy of God. Instead of thus torturing yourself for your sins, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in the righteousness of his life, and the expiation of his death." But Luther objected to this, that he was not as yet turned to God,—converted. "I must be changed," said he, "before God can receive me." His guide knew the way better, and told him that there could be no real conversion while man feared God as a severe judge. "In order to be filled with the love of that which is good," said he, "you must be filled with the love of

God. If you wish to be really converted, seek it not in these mortifications and penances. You must love Him who has first loved you." Speaking afterward to Staupitz, on this very conversation, he said, (in May, 1518,) "Your word was fastened in my soul as a sharp and powerful arrow."\* New light had broken in upon his mind. He studied the Scriptures, and found that Staupitz had spoken the truth. He had a measure of peace, but his faith was extremely weak, nor had he fully renounced the habit of *looking to himself*. "O my sin, my sin!" he exclaimed on one occasion, before Staupitz. The reply was, "Would you be only the *semblance* of a sinner, and have only the *semblance* of a Saviour?" He added, "Know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of real and great sinners, even of those who are utterly deserving of condemnation."

Staupitz likewise gave him many valuable directions as to his studies. He advised him to derive his divinity from the word of God, rather than from the systems of the schools; and, to aid him in so doing, made him what was to him, and in those days, a most valuable present;—he gave him a copy of the Bible. Luther now had one of his own; and from that time he studied the Scriptures with increasing zeal, especially the Epistles of St. Paul.

He was now "not far from the kingdom of God," and foretastes of its peace and joy had been vouchsafed, to preserve him from despair; but his conscience had not yet fully found rest. His body again began to yield to the exercises of his mind. He was attacked with a malady that brought him to the brink

\* Hæsit hoc verbum tuum in me, sicut sagitta potentis acuta.

of the grave ; and in the prospect of death, his former anguish and fears returned. His own sinfulness, and God's holiness, disturbed his mind. This time it was by a very humble instrument that God gave him comfort. On one occasion, while in his cell, he was visited by an aged monk, to whom he opened his heart. The old monk directed him to the Apostles' Creed, and repeated the article, "The forgiveness of sins." "You must not only believe that David's or Peter's sins are forgiven. The commandment of God is, that we believe that our own sins are forgiven." He added, "This is what St. Bernard says in his discourse on the Annunciation. The testimony which the Holy Ghost applies to your heart is this, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

It is plain that Luther was directed by the old monk to such a faith as should be *personal* and *appropriating*, and connected with the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the forgiveness of sins. Whether they clearly perceived the distinction between the faith which must precede the testimony, and the testimony itself, is not directly apparent. Faith exercised *in order to pardon*, does not, *in its own nature*, imply the testimony of pardon. The one is prior ; the other is subsequent. Still, the two are so closely and immediately connected, that in times of such obscurity as those in which Luther and the old monk were conversing, the wonder is that they saw things so clearly as they did. But it was the work of God, bringing his *servant* to the state of a *son*. Luther saw that he was not only to acknowledge, generally, that Christ was the sole and sufficient Saviour, but that he had to trust in him for the forgiveness of his own sins, and to look for the testi-



mony of the Holy Ghost that he was pardoned, in connection with his faith. It is possible that some degree of confusion might rest on his *views*, but his *experience* was clear and sound.

The comfort he had received to his spirit restored health to his body. He had obtained new life in more than one sense. He quickly arose from his sick bed ; every day he prayed for help from above, and every day renewed strength was imparted to his soul.

It would not be right to pass from this deeply-interesting period of Luther's life, without reflecting on the remarkable fact which is presented to us. In the depth of the darkness of that miserable age, a poor monk had found peace with God by faith in Christ ; and thus he became the means of instructing the man, who, *because instructed in that one point*, was enabled, as an instrument of God's mercy, to pour forth light and life on every hand. The suggesting principle of the Lutheran Reformation has often been misapprehended. One object which the single-minded monk contemplated was the restoration of the word of God to its undivided supremacy, as the rule of faith and practice ; but even this was but in the order of means to that which was really and properly his end, and without which, the Reformation itself would not have been attempted, and cannot be understood. Luther's great object was to point to Christ as the only Saviour and Intercessor, and to call on men to receive salvation as most freely given, for the alone worthiness of the Lord Jesus. Pardon, and peace of conscience, and power to love and serve God, obtained by the faith which acknowledged the grace of God in Christ to be all in all, were Luther's grand themes : at once

the objects for which he contended, and the armoury which supplied him with the weapons with which he won the victory. In the triumphs of the Reformation, the rights of conscience, civil freedom, intellectual disenthralment and life, all participated; but the real victory consisted in the establishment of that spiritual religion, whose ineffaceable sign is, justification by faith alone. Luther became a reformer, not because he had found the Bible at Erfurt, and studied it at Wittenberg, though these were steps in the wonderful process; but he became a reformer because he had found peace of conscience, and power over sin, by faith in the merits of Christ; because he had found, to quote the language of Bernard, "the testimony which the Holy Ghost applied to his heart, 'THY sins are forgiven thee.'"

Having now been in the cloister nearly two years, Luther resolved to proceed with his purpose of devoting himself exclusively to a religious life: he was therefore ordained priest on the 2d of May, 1507, by Jerome, bishop of Brandenburg. Hitherto his father had not forgiven the disappointment he had experienced in his son's withdrawal from secular pursuits, and the consequent extinction of all prospects of secular aggrandizement. He accepted, however, his son's invitation to be present at the ceremony of his ordination, and the reconciliation was complete.

After his ordination, following the advice of Staupitz, he frequently made short excursions to the parishes and convents of the neighbourhood, partly to occupy his mind, and partly for the sake of his health; seeking, at the same time, to accustom himself to preaching. The time, however, was approaching when a wider

sphere of action was to open around him. His evidently great abilities, his eloquence, his various learning, together with the austere purity of his morals, which had procured for him the universal respect of the people of Wittenberg, recommended him to the notice of Frederic, the elector of Saxony; and when, in the year 1508, that enlightened prince established the University of Wittenberg, by the advice of Staupitz, he invited Luther to be one of the professors.

To the duties of this new situation he applied himself with exemplary diligence. He devoted much time to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, and daily lectured upon the Holy Scriptures. He began with the book of Psalms, and then proceeded to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In lecturing upon this latter portion of sacred writ, he spoke under the influence of strong personal emotion. He had himself felt the power of the truths which he had to expound, and he knew their value and sweetness. He appeared before the attendants on his lectures, not as a rhetorician who coloured his words\* to make them acceptable, but as a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of

\* In Luther's days, the "liberal arts" were supposed to be seven. They were divided into two classes, three in one, four in the other. These classes were respectively called the Trivium, and the Quadrivium. The division is marked out in the following lines:—

*Gram.* loquitur; *Dia.* verba docet; *Rhe.* verba colorat:

*Mus.* canit; *Ar.* numerat; *Geo.* ponderat; *As.* colit astra.

*Grammar* speaks; *Logic* teaches to use words; and *Rhetoric* to colour them.

*Music* sings; *Arithmetic* reckons; *Geometry* weighs; *Astronomy* studies the stars.

God, speaking from the fulness of his heart. So ably was he considered to discharge the duties of his appointment, that his fame went abroad throughout Germany, and attracted pupils from all parts of the country. The very professors attended Luther's lectures. One of the most eminent among them (Mellerstadt) said of him, "This monk will put all the doctors to the rout; he will introduce a new style of doctrine, and will reform the whole church. He builds upon the word of Christ; and no one in this world can either resist or overthrow that word, though it should be attacked by the weapons of philosophers, sophists, Scotists, Albertists, and Thomists."

Staupitz also pressed him to preach. Luther already felt the greatness of the work of the pulpit, and shrunk from it, ably as he discharged the duties of the professor's chair. "It is no light thing," said he, "to speak to men in God's stead." He yielded, however, and crowds soon flocked to hear him. He was in earnest; he preached precisely those truths which always find their way to the heart; and, encumbered as they yet were by "the wood, and the hay, and the stubble," yet spoken, warmly and colloquially, by one whose object was, not to attract attention to himself, but to awaken a right feeling in his hearers, they produced, to a very considerable extent, the effect which he contemplated. Even Bossuet acknowledges that "he had a lively and impetuous eloquence, which delighted and captivated his auditory." Thus, at the age of twenty-seven, was the youthful student, professor, and preacher occupied, obtaining for himself general approbation and esteem, and especially the entire confidence of his own order, among whom he dwelt;

for he was still an Augustine monk. The Jesuit Maimbourg himself acknowledges that "he acquitted himself in his various engagements so as to gain great applause, and to render himself considerable among his brethren." Providence was preparing him for a great work. The seeds of divine knowledge were sown in his heart, and the effect was a powerful, honest, uncompromising attachment to the truth; so that he stood ready to admit whatever truth presented, and to cast away whatever truth condemned. And thus did he become, ultimately, the honoured instrument of directing the attention of the nations to the true bread of immortal life, the food without which they die.

## CHAPTER II.

IN the year 1510 Luther visited Rome, being deputed by his brethren of the Augustinian order to attend the pope on their behalf, and arrange before him certain differences which had arisen between them and the vicar-general of the pontificate. Astounded at the pomp and prodigality which reigned in the Papal court, and greatly revolted by the indecorum and licentiousness which prevailed among the clergy, as well as by their careless and indecent manner of performing the public services of the church, his first definite conception of ecclesiastical abuses may be dated from this epoch. Upon all occasions throughout his after-life, he affirmed the scenes he witnessed in this journey had filled him with horror and amazement. "At Rome," he says, "I heard them say mass in such a manner that I detest them: for at the communion-table I heard courtesans laugh and boast of their wickedness; and others, concerning the bread and wine of the altar, saying, 'Bread thou art, and bread thou shalt remain; wine thou art, and wine thou shalt remain.'" He adds, that the effect on his own feelings of what he then saw of the depraved condition of the church was such as he would not have foregone for a thousand florins. But for the scandalous exhibitions which then met his eye, it is possible that the preaching of indulgences by Tetzl, some few years afterward, in Saxony, might not have forced upon him so keen a sense of the effrontery and flagrant impiety of the pope, in sanctioning such practices upon the

credulity of the populace,—practices which tended yet more effectually to vitiate their morals than to drain their purses.

While at Rome, he several times said mass himself, and went through the service with the seriousness with which the truly devout mind engages in all the services of religion, much more in those which it believes to be the most solemn. On these occasions, however, the Italian priests laughed at the simplicity of the German monk, who appeared to be a believer in earnest; and they even called upon him to hasten his performance, and in language proving the heartless infidelity which reigned among them. “Quick, quick,” said one of the priests; “send our lady her son back speedily!”

One of the most remarkable occurrences, however, of this visit to Rome, was that which produced a deepened impression of the indissoluble connection between peace of mind and living faith in Christ.

One day, wishing to obtain an indulgence promised by the pope to any one who should ascend *Pilate's staircase* on his knees, the poor Saxon monk was slowly climbing the steps, which he was told had been miraculously transported from Jerusalem to Rome. While he was going through this work, to which his yet only partially-liberated mind ascribed some degree of merit, the words, “THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH,” were applied with great light and power to his inmost soul. He was struck with shame at his own superstition and debasement, started up, and fled from the scene of his folly, leaving the work unfinished. But the impression remained. He saw more clearly than ever, that the believed gospel was the power of God to actual

salvation,—to pardon, and peace, and holiness ; and thus did he return from Rome possessing that weapon by which alone the might of Rome could be subdued, and the pride of Rome brought down.

In the month of October, 1512, by desire, and at the charge, of the elector Frederic, Luther was invested with the degree of doctor of divinity. This honour he at first objected to receive, on the ground of his youth ; but his scruples were overruled by some of his friends in the university, who persuaded him, probably with very little apprehension of the emphatic truth of their prediction, that “he must submit to be thus dignified, *because the Almighty had signal services to be performed by his instrumentality in the church.*” Stimulated to increased diligence and exertion by this new elevation, he persevered in his devotion to the study of the Scriptures, and gained additional esteem among his learned contemporaries, by his Commentaries on the Psalms, and the Epistle to the Romans. Especially by these works he commended himself to the more favourable regard of the Saxon prince-electors ; a man whose fine sagacity appreciated the extraordinary energy of Luther’s character, and perhaps, to some extent, anticipated the result of his labours and indomitable probity of mind.

From his letters, written in the year 1516, we learn that he then acted as vicar of the Augustine fraternity, in Thuringia and Misnia ; a promotion which he most likely owed to the good offices of his friend Staupitz, the principal of the convent at Wittenberg. In the discharge of his vicarial functions, he became known to George of Saxony, successor to the elector Frederic, before whom he preached at Dresden. In the



course of the same year he made his first appearance as a controversial writer, having engaged in a dissension with Jodocus, his former tutor at Erfurt, relative to the Aristotelian system of philosophy. So bitterly did his opponent resent the inexpressible sin of disputing the authority of Aristotle, that when Luther next visited Erfurt, he refused to hold any intercourse with a person who had so grievously offended. In this case Luther's conduct was marked by the same fearless spirit, and unswerving honesty, which characterized his whole career. The estrangement of his friend could not deter him from speaking out what he believed to be the truth. He wrote a second letter to the Erfurt professor, which is remarkable, not merely for its felicitous expression, its tone of forcible expostulation, and veiled contempt for the unreasonable acerbity and prejudice of his antagonist, but still more so, as disclosing the first preconception of the great work of renovation which he was destined to accomplish. In this letter he observes, with singular emphasis, that although the church stood in need of being extensively reformed, that reformation could never be effected until the whole process and scheme of education, then prevalent in Christendom, should be amended.

Within twelve months from the date of this correspondence, Luther set up his famous propositions. Leo X., impatient for the completion of the great metropolitan edifice at Rome, was not content with merely authorizing the public sale of indulgences, but, with a view to expedite the enrichment of his coffers, he hit upon an expedient which would have far better suited the genius of a Hebrew stock-jobber, than it consisted with the responsibilities and station of a grave and

sovereign ecclesiastic. The details of the whole transaction were, to the last degree, infamous. Letting out the different countries of Europe to the highest bidder, he received a price beforehand for the exclusive right to dispose of these dispensations within certain districts. The arrangement was precisely similar to that which in this country is daily entered into between commissioners of the high-road and the lessees of turnpikes, the former party assigning to the renter the tolls accruing within a specified period, in consideration of a stipulated sum of money being paid in advance. The inevitable tendency of this vicious and disgraceful proceeding, this *farming-out* of the spiritual tollage of the Christian world, was to exasperate the avarice, and degrade the character, of those clerical dignitaries who were rich enough to purchase the privilege of selling the pontifical pardons. Apart from all preliminary considerations of the iniquitous delusion upon which it based, the entire bargain, regarded as a simple matter of business, was, in fact, a mere and most execrable piece of gambling. Albert, archbishop of Magdeburg, who was also hereditary elector of Mentz, an astute and not unlearned prelate, but whose covetousness appears to have, in this instance, overreached his foresight, had contracted for the sale of dispensations throughout Germany, in the hope, doubtless, of deriving from it an ample compensation for his advance to the pope. With the approbation of Leo, he nominated as commissaries for the disposal of the indulgences, two Dominican friars, Accumboldo, and John Tetzels,—men whose names are saved from oblivion only by the importance of the results which their acts mainly assisted to develop.

Both of these agents were persons of gross ignorance, and notorious depravity of conduct. In that age of abandoned churchmen, it would probably have been difficult to find a more accomplished specimen of the general corruption, insolence, and moral worthlessness of the Romish priesthood, than was Tetzal. Convicted, some years before, of adultery, under circumstances of peculiar aggravation, he had been condemned to be thrown into the river Inn; and was reprieved only at the intercession of the elector Frederic. Profligate in their manners, as they were unprincipled in heart and life, the very terms in which these unworthy commissaries announced their mission were revolting and indecent. Among other things, they published that their commission was so large as to afford impunity even to one who should violate (if that were possible) the "mother of God" herself! In short, it is hard to say which was the more shocking, the blasphemous absurdity of their pretensions, or the brutal obscenity of imagination indicated by the language in which those pretensions were couched.

{ That the appearance of such men, claiming to be clothed with such plenary authority from their ecclesiastical superior, and making such indecorous proclamation, should have stirred the anger of the conscientious and devout Luther, occasions no surprise. The wonder is rather that, spite of the numerous abuses which had overgrown the Roman doctrine and ceremonial, the whole body of the German clergy should not have risen as one man to protest against this odious and glaring impiety. } Luther, indeed, would seem to have at first persuaded himself that Tetzal and his colleague had exceeded their commis-

sion ; and that neither the supreme pontiff, nor the territorial diocesan, were cognizant of their publications. Unaware of the negotiation which had taken place between the prince-archbishop and the Roman see, he looked upon the actual dispensers of the far-famed indulgences as bringing, by their monstrous declarations, a gratuitous reproach upon religion, and offending hardly less against the canons of the church than against the law of God. It is to be remembered that at the time in question, and for long after, Luther had no thought of separation from communion with the Roman Church. He still held in awe the existing ecclesiastical constitution, and had never suffered himself to doubt of the legitimate sovereignty of the successors of St. Peter. That he also clung at this period to some general notion of the infallibility of the church is tolerably certain ; though it is worthy of observation, that he appears to have considered that infallibility to have resided, not (as has since been contended) in the individual pope for the time being, but in the decretals and declared opinions of the ancient councils. This, no doubt, was the original shape of the doctrine ;—a doctrine indeed which, in any shape, is open to most serious objection ; but which, under this mitigated and more reasonable aspect, does not involve the frightful consequences that would flow from an admission of its other and more dangerous form.

Tetzel had been forbidden by the princes of Saxony, who were indignant at his shameful traffic, to enter their dominions ; but he approached as nearly as possible, and set up what was, in fact, his booth and stall, at Juterboch, distant only four miles from Wittenberg.

The people flocked there in crowds ; for the indulgence promised relief from indefinite suffering, and was scarcely distinguishable from (we fear was not intended to be distinguished from) the most absolute pardon. And thus was the matter brought to a crisis. Luther's views of ecclesiastical power placed it, not in supremacy, but in subordination. With him, salvation by the grace of God, through the merit of Christ, to be apprehended and appropriated by faith, was the principle to which the whole system of confession, penance, and absolution was but the appendage. Whatever became of the last, the first was to be maintained.

This was the state of his mind when the matter was brought before him in a practical form, calling for distinct and immediate decision. One day he was in the confessional at Wittenberg. Several residents of the town presented themselves, who confessed they had been guilty of great irregularities ; but to the exhortations of the confessor they replied by pleading the indulgences they had purchased. He immediately began to dissuade them from the confidence he at once saw they were reposing in these ecclesiastical licenses ; and they, some angry that what they had purchased should be of such little value, others alarmed lest what they had rested upon should fail them, hastened back to Tetzl, and told him that one of the Augustine monks had been warning them against his letters. Tetzl was enraged, and, even in the pulpit, used the most fearful expressions on the subject ; declaring that he was ordered by the pope to burn the heretics who should dare to oppose these holy indulgences.

THUS COMMENCED THE REFORMATION. In these apparently trivial circumstances began one of the

mightiest and most momentous changes that the world had ever witnessed. These were the beginning, says Melancthon, of this controversy, in which Luther dreamed not of the changes that would ensue.\*

At the same time, it is evident that Luther could not conceal from himself, the moment he considered the subject practically, the unscriptural nature and abomination of the practice of granting indulgences. He therefore resolved to raise his voice in his place in the university against the revival of this imposition. He likewise wrote two letters, one to the bishop of the diocese, the other to the archiepiscopal prince of Mentz, within whose jurisdiction Tetzel was carrying on his nefarious traffic; pointing out the demoralizing tendency of such a commerce, and supplicating their interference to put a stop to it. Receiving no answer to either of these communications, and strong in his conviction that the right and truth were with him, he resolved to have recourse to means more decisive than mere personal remonstrances and cautions to those with whom he was immediately connected.

Accordingly, he ascended the pulpit, and though affectionately, yet with great fidelity, warned the people against trusting to these indulgences, and neglecting the weightier matters of the divine law. His hearers were much affected by his discourse, which was printed, read with eagerness, and produced a deep impression. Tetzel, however, continued both his traffic and abuse; and this led to what was, decidedly, the first *open act* of the Reformation. The feast of All-Saints was a very important day at Wittenberg, as the

\* Hæc initia fuerunt hujus controversiæ, in quâ Lutherus nihil suspicans aut somnians de futurâ mutatione rituum, *etc.*

church which the elector had built was well stored with relics ; and whoever on that day visited it and confessed himself, obtained a plenary indulgence. To this church Luther boldly repaired on this celebrated day, October 31st, 1517, and affixed to the door ninety-five theses, or propositions, against indulgences ; thus, in the usual way, challenging discussion on the subject.

In these "conclusions" the light which had shone on Luther's own mind was plainly apparent ; but as yet, in himself, it was mingled with much obscurity, and even error. Doctrines, however, were now propounded to the people which threatened the whole Papal system, though he who propounded them saw not as yet whither they tended.

Thus he says,—

VI. "The pope cannot remit any condemnation ; but can only declare and confirm the remission that God himself has given, except only in cases that belong to him. If he does otherwise, the condemnation continues the same."

VIII. "The laws of ecclesiastical penance can only be imposed on the living, and in no wise respect the dead."

XXV. "The same power that the pope has over purgatory in the church at large, is possessed by every bishop and every curate in his own particular diocess and parish."

XXXVII. "Every true Christian, dead or living, is a partaker of all the riches of Christ, or of the church, by the gift of God, and without any letter of indulgence."

XXXVIII. "Yet we must not despise the pope's

distributive and pardoning power ; for his pardon is a declaration of God's pardon."

XCIV. "We must exhort Christians to endeavour to follow Christ, their Head, under the cross, through death and hell."

XCV. "For it is better through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of heaven, than to gain a carnal serenity by the consolations of a false peace."

Some of these "conclusions" show what were the practices of the venders of Papal indulgences, and the pitch of corruption to which the whole system had arisen.

XXVII. "Those persons preach human inventions who pretend that, at the very moment when the money sounds in the strong box, the soul escapes from purgatory."

XXXII. "Those who fancy themselves sure of their salvation by indulgences, will go to the devil with those who teach them this doctrine."

XLII. "We must teach Christians that the pope neither expects nor wishes us to compare the act of preaching indulgences with any charitable work whatsoever."

XLIII. "We must teach Christians, that he who gives to the poor, or lends to the needy, does better than he who buys an indulgence."

XLV. "We must teach Christians, that he who sees his neighbour in want, and, notwithstanding that, buys an indulgence, does not in reality acquire the pope's indulgence, and draws down on himself the anger of God."

LIII. "They are the enemies of the pope and of Christ, who, to favour the preaching of indulgences, forbid the preaching of the word of God."



The general tendency of these propositions was evidently not merely to weaken the effect of the indulgences, but to expose their fraudulent character, and at the same time to weaken the very foundations of the authority whence they were supposed to be derived. In the protest with which the paper was connected, Luther declared that he put forth his theses only as doubtful propositions, in respect to which he solicited the information of the learned. He likewise added (what was, indeed, an established custom on such occasions) a solemn declaration, that he did not wish to say or affirm anything that was not founded on the Holy Scriptures, the fathers of the church, and the rights and decretals of the court of Rome.

These propositions, thus accompanied, after they had been affixed to the door of the church, he forthwith printed, and put them in free circulation. And now it was that the wonderful power of the press became evident. Had it not been for this, a few copies in manuscript would have been circulated, and after the excitement of the moment, the whole matter would have subsided into its former quiescence. But copies were multiplied, and created for themselves an increasing demand. Their power increased by moving onward, and soon was their influence felt, where only the press could have made it felt, through the entire mass of the community.

Luther himself had no conception of the effects which his publication produced. He saw an actually-existing evil in the manner in which indulgences were preached and received, and against that evil, and that alone, he resolutely addressed himself. As far as he

knew the truth, he was resolved to follow it; and it was this which led him onward. In his mind, submission to truth was one part of submission to the will of God. It was an essential branch of religion. With him truth was not only not to be opposed, but not even to be concealed.

Luther, therefore, did not suppose that he was attacking the church, or calling the pope to account. He appears sincerely to have believed that, by these indulgences, not only was the religion of simple-hearted people, but the credit of the pope, endangered. As to the low falsehood invented by some enemies of Luther after his death, and which even Cardinal Pallavicini calls a calumny, that Luther's opposition originated in his jealousy, as a Franciscan, of the Dominicans, whose order had the German market for indulgences; it will be sufficient thus to mention it, and to say that it is one of those calumnies which no opponent, having any regard for his own character, or seeking to obtain hearers except among those whom superstition has first blinded and then brutalized, will attempt to revive. Luther sought to remedy a present evil; but he went into the contest with a perfectly honest mind, resolved to follow the truth whithersoever it might lead him. Speaking afterward of these transactions, he called God to witness that he had engaged in them as by mere accident, and not by any preconceived plan.\*

Still, this publication of his theses was an act which, if we take into account the array of influence and power by which he saw that the system of indulgences was supported, has seldom been paralleled for moral

\* "Casu enim, non voluntate nec studio, in has turbas incidi; Deum ipsum testor."

intrepidity and decision. The far-seeing monk could not but perceive the possibility of a collision where a collision was most to be dreaded, and where his own feelings would most desire to avoid it. But his was the true courage which fearlessly attended to present duty, leaving the future in the hands of God.

It may further be remarked of these "conclusions," that the whole series is throughout written with conspicuous ability. Of all the propositions, characterized as they uniformly are by a peculiar felicity and strength of diction, the most pungent, as well as that which best illustrates the fearlessness and generous energy of the man, is one in which he declares, that as to the building of St. Peter's by the profits arising from the distribution of indulgences, the pope, who was "richer than the richest Crassus," could, if he pleased, finish it with his own funds : but that even if he had not the means of completing the church, it would be far better to sell it as it stood, for the relief of those who, for its erection, were defrauded into the purchase of worthless and ineffectual dispensations, or to burn the whole pile to the ground, than thus to build it up with the blood and substance of the poor.

Tetzel, who, when these celebrated propositions issued from the press, was at Frankfort, acting as inquisitor, and prosecuting his trade in pardons, exasperated at the tenor of a document which threatened to deprive him of his occupation, and still more by the opprobrium which Luther had publicly cast upon him, published a set of counter propositions, in which, says Luther, "he maintained the most insolent and impious doctrines relative to the infallibility and pretended power of the pope, and railed against heresiarchs, by

which title he designated me and my friends ; winding up his insolence by publicly burning my theses in Frankfort."

Among the counter theses which Tetzal put forth, and declared himself ready to defend, are the following :—

III. " Christians should be taught, that the pope, in the plenitude of his power, is superior to the universal church, and superior to councils ; and that entire submission is due to his decrees."

IV. " Christians should be taught, that the pope alone has the right to decide in questions of Christian doctrine ; that he alone, and no other, has power to explain, according to his judgment, the sense of Holy Scripture, and to approve or condemn the words and works of others."

V. " Christians should be taught, that the judgment of the pope, in things pertaining to Christian doctrine and necessary to the salvation of mankind, can in no case err."

XVII. " Christians should be taught, that there are many things which the church regards as certain articles of the Catholic faith, although they are not found either in the inspired Scripture or in the early fathers."

No sooner did the news of the scorn which had been put upon their eminent and revered instructor come to the ears of the students at Wittenberg, than they assembled in great numbers, and retaliated upon Tetzal, by committing his publication to the flames, amid the cheers and hootings of many of the older citizens. " I was not grieved," Luther adds, " that such a collection of extravagance and absurdity met with its just fate ; but I did regret the manner in which

the thing was done ; and solemnly affirm that I knew nothing of it, neither did the elector or the magistrates.”

Other opponents now began to take the field against Luther. Foremost among them was John Eck, vice-chancellor of the university of Ingolstadt, a town in Bavaria. The virulence of this personage's eloquent, but not very argumentative, attack, however, rendered it innocuous to any but his own party. Luther treated him with profound and merited contempt. Another assailant, and one who, if not much more formidable in point of argument, was so, at least, in virtue of his official station, was Sylvester Prierias, also a Dominican, and master of the apostolical palace at Rome, part of whose duty consisted in the licensing of books. With the arrogance and supercilious complacency proper to his censorial functions, Prierias summarily disposed of the Wittenberg memorial, by pronouncing all its arguments to be alike heretical. In his reply, Luther, with admirable skill, exposes the exquisite silliness and impertinence of thus concluding a question, *ex cathedrâ* and *in limine* ; which, however, he observes, in recurring to this passage of his history, “is the usual method of reasoning on the part of the Roman tyrants.” He laid down in this production two noble principles. “The first is this passage of St Paul : ‘If any one preach unto you another gospel than that is preached, though he should be an angel from heaven, let him be accursed.’ The second is from St. Augustine writing to Jerome : ‘I have learned to render to the inspired Scriptures alone the homage of a firm belief that they have never erred ; as to others, I do not believe in the things they teach, simply because it is they who teach them.’” He con-

cludes his reply by referring to the threatening language which Prierias had used: "You say that the pope is both pontiff and emperor, and that he can employ the secular arm to compel obedience. Do you thirst for blood, then? I protest to you that these rodomontades and menaces of yours give me not the slightest alarm. For what if I were to lose my life? Christ still lives; Christ, my Lord, and the Lord of all, blessed for ever. Amen." This was the secret of Luther's courage from first to last. He most entirely saw and felt that the truth advocated by him was not his, but Christ's; and he as much believed in the actual defence of truth by the power of Christ, as though he had every moment had the glorious vision present with him of the heavens opened, and Christ Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, and there, in calm but resistless majesty, maintaining his own cause.

The apostolical licenser, so far from being silenced by the castigation he had received, put forth a second and still more objectionable pamphlet; in which he contended not only that the Papal authority was superior to that of councils, and the ancient canons of the church, but also that the true interpretation of the sacred writings themselves was altogether dependant upon the mere *dictum* of the pope. To such blasphemy and unflinching imposture, Luther avers that he deemed it unnecessary to give any further answer; contenting himself with a brief and pithy declaration, that the book of Prierias was, from beginning to end, so totally made up of impiety and falsehood, that it could only have been written at the instigation of the devil, if, indeed, Satan was not its veritable author; and that if the pope and cardinals approved

of such productions, Rome must surely be the seat of all abominations, and the synagogue of antichrist. "Blasphemous, dissolute, and unhappy Rome," he exclaimed, "the wrath of God, which thou hast deeply merited, is come upon thee ; thou habitation of impurities, and very pantheon of impiety !"

The next adversary who entered the lists upon the side of Papacy was a certain long-breathed and very dull writer, who laboured under the ponderous name of Hoogenstraaten. This priest, we apprehend, must have been afflicted with a constitutional itching for disputation. With as little knowledge of the subjects he assumed to deal with as ever a poor intellect brought to a forlorn undertaking, he could not refrain from thrusting his barren lucubrations into collision with the efforts of the mightiest spirits of his age. It was not Luther alone upon whose path he foisted the leaden abortions of his brain ; nor did he confine his labours to polemical divinity. Other distinguished writers, and, among the rest, Erasmus, were honoured with his controversial hostility. He was one of those literal-minded, narrow-hearted compounds of frozen stolidity, to whom the solemn pedantries and congenial prejudices of an outworn system are an inheritance and birthright ; about whom they cling as an appropriate garment ; and who, by original defect of sensibility, are precluded from all sympathy with noble impulses and liberal thought. More honest, as of blunter faculties, and fully more bitter than were his coadjutors, he recommended to the pope to reconvert Luther by imprisonment and fire ; it never having occurred to him that the disparity of intellectual grasp and vigor between himself and Luther inferred, *a priori*, a pro-

bability of the latter being right, while he was in the wrong. A greater power of stringing together sentences of obscure meaning and no worth, never man possessed than did Hoogenstraaten. If he had written his own somewhat ominous appellation over and over again, some thousands of times, his volumes would have been of about the same value to the Roman hierarchy, and, in all likelihood, just as long remembered in the world of letters.

The list of the reformer's earliest antagonists closes with the names of Enisen,—an author whose asperities were abundantly countervailed by his insignificance, and who is now generally forgotten,—and the cardinal Cajetan, of whom we shall have more to say hereafter. To all of these Luther responded at much length, and with a store of Scriptural and theological learning which was, for the time, even more extraordinary than were the logical force, the breadth of illustration, and singular variety of intelligence, which his polemical works exhibit. In reviewing the productions of this first set of opponents to the incipient Reformation, it is really curious to observe with what extreme feebleness, what spiteful imbecility and fatuous self-exposure, they conducted the vindication of their cause, and avowed themselves the champions of that ignorance and servile bigotry which their writings betokened. "I know not," says Erasmus, in one of his epistles, "how it has happened; but certain it is, that they who first contended against him were not less the foes of learning than of Luther. Hence the friends of learning were the less adverse to him, because, by aiding his adversaries, they would have done injury to their own cause."



## CHAPTER III.

LUTHER was now in his thirty-fifth year. He had published his theses concerning indulgences, and the loud and angry replies that were immediately poured forth proved that the arrow which the monk had sent forth at a venture had struck between the joints of the harness, and inflicted a wound, if not on a vital, yet on an extremely-sensitive part. Before entering on the description of the contests that followed, of the extent and consequences of which it is plain that he had nothing like an adequate conception, it will be proper to consider the principles on which he acted, and the objects at which he aimed. The labours of the man will be enveloped in complete obscurity, unless the man himself, as he really was at this period of his life, be well understood.

That he was a Christian, in the highest sense of the term, the foregoing narrative will have evinced : he was possessed, therefore, of godly sincerity. He not only believed that he was right,—that is, he was no hypocrite,—but, which is far more important, he desired and intended to be right. He was willing to do the will of God, and therefore he was anxious to know it. He believed that the opinions he had formed were correct, and when assailed, he defended them ; but he defended them because he regarded them as portions of divine truth, not because they were his own. Nor is this distinction a merely verbal one. He who defends his opinions because they are his, maintains the position which he occupies for the sake

of the honour which he connects with successful argument. He contends for victory ; he is prompted by pride. And the means which he employs will be in no small degree influenced by the end which he seeks. Aiming at victory rather than truth, the arguments he uses will be such as appear calculated to secure the one, rather than to discover the other. But he who defends his opinions because he believes them to be portions of divinely-revealed truth, defends them because of their intrinsic excellence and value ; and therefore he will always be ready to listen to the arguments which seem to show that he is mistaken. He contends for the truth because he loves the truth ; and he loves the truth because he knows that nothing else can impart heavenly wisdom, and contribute to the real well-being of the immortal mind. He will neither be changeable nor obstinate. What he believes to be the truth, he will always have the courage to maintain ; what he discovers to be error, he will always have the honesty to renounce.

Such at this time was Luther. To know the truth for himself, and to make the truth known to others, were the governing desires, they might almost be called, the ruling passions, of his whole soul.

And the truth which he desired to know and teach, he sought in its proper source, the Holy Scriptures. These he studied for himself ; these he laboured to explain to others. When his own opinions were assailed, the Scriptures furnished him with weapons of defence ; and when he became the assailant, they supplied weapons of attack. "To the law and the testimony" was his unwavering appeal. The Bible was for him both the fountain and standard of truth.

When called to the combat, he was careful to “fight the good fight of FAITH,” and not less careful to combat with “the sword of the Spirit, which is THE WORD OF GOD.”

But the most important aspect of Luther’s character yet remains to be considered. In saying that he was truly a spiritual man,—that he was under the gospel what such as Nathanael were under the law, “Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile,”—we say no more than may be said of many who lived and died in the communion of the Roman Church. The celebrated Thomas à Kempis may be mentioned as belonging to a very important class of religionists, sincerely devoted to the service of God. But, while their piety was undoubted, their sentiments on some most important subjects were exceedingly incorrect. The system to which they belonged almost unavoidably occasioned this. The doctrines of penance and absolution can scarcely fail of diverting the attention from the great evangelical method of a sinner’s justification, forensically considered; and as neither the practice of penance nor the reception of absolution was sufficient to give peace to the sincere and awakened conscience, other methods were sought which gave to the whole piety a distinctive character. To the law of God, such men as Kempis devoutly attended; and their remarks and directions on subjects connected with obedience and self-denial are often not only correct but invaluable. But even their obedience did not give them peace; for, as they went on to know more of the law, and more of themselves, the imperfection of their best performances was continually before them, and the peace they found not in *doing*, they sought, but not more suc-

cessfully, in *suffering*. They sought, in fact, to make atonement for their own sins, and by physical austerities utterly to subdue the motions of the flesh.

This, at first, was Luther's state ; and we have not only seen the *fact*, but the *method*, of his deliverance. He was led to study the gospel as well as the law, and to acquaint himself with the differences between them. He had fully entered into the subject opened to the mind by such declarations as, "BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED ;" and, "BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." He considered the atonement of Christ as the only foundation of a sinner's hope, and studied it, therefore, both deeply and practically. He had a clear and distinct perception of the revelation of the expiatory and vicarious character of the sufferings of Christ ; and, following out the doctrine in all its Scriptural ramifications, he had arrived at what he afterward called "the article of a standing or falling church," that as without pardon there could be no peace of conscience, so pardon itself was the free and most merciful gift of God, which the penitent sinner was to receive by faith in Christ, and which by that faith alone he could receive. Faith, he saw, was required, because that faith was the distinct acknowledgment that pardon was given for the sake of Christ's atonement. By this faith Luther had himself found the peace and the power which asceticism had never been able to convey ; and in this faith he continued to live, as in this faith he eventually expired.

It was to be expected, therefore, that to this great subject his preaching and teaching should bear explicit, faithful, and constant testimony. And thus it was.

His works are characterized by it ; and he deals with the subject with an earnestness which proves the overwhelming importance which he attached to it. A few citations from one of the best-known English translations of his works, his " Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians," will prove this.

The favourite subject of Luther was the different operations of the law and the gospel. He fully understood the effect of the law on the awakened conscience of the sinner, according to the apostle's declaration, " For the law worketh wrath." To produce, therefore, a conviction of sin, he would have the law employed. " Among those," he says, " which are not of the number of God's people, the greatest point of wisdom is to know, and earnestly to urge, the law, and the active righteousness." But this being secured, the conscience being thoroughly aroused, the elevated purity of the law, and the entire corruption and weakness of man, being clearly seen, deeply felt, and unreservedly acknowledged ; and the question, " What must I do to be saved ?" being extorted by the pressure of guilt, set home to the heart with all the force of a divine commandment,—another mode of address is required. Luther thoroughly understood this. He knew, both from study and experience, that from the contemplation of the law, considered in its proper character, as authoritative direction, no peace could be derived to the sinner. " True it is," he says, " that of all things in the world the law is most excellent : yet it is not able to quiet a troubled conscience, but increaseth its terrors, and driveth it to desperation." In describing " the true way to Christianity," he assigns the reason of this, as indeed it had before been assigned by the apostle in

saying that the law "was weak through the flesh." "Now the true way to Christianity is this, that a man do first acknowledge himself by the law to be a sinner, and that it is impossible for him to do any good work. For the law saith, 'Thou art an evil tree, and therefore all that thou thinkest, speakest, or doest, is against God.' Thou canst not, therefore, deserve grace by thy works; which if thou go about to do, thou doublest thy offence; for since thou art an evil tree, thou canst not but bring forth evil fruits, that is to say, sins. When a man is thus taught and instructed by the law, then is he terrified and humbled; then he seeth indeed the greatness of his sin, and cannot find in himself one spark of the love of God; therefore he justifieth God in his word, and confesseth that he is guilty of death and eternal damnation. The first part, then, of Christianity is the preaching of repentance, and the knowledge of ourselves." Again: "The law requireth perfect obedience unto God, and condemneth all those that do not accomplish the same. Now it is certain that there is no man living which is able to perform this obedience, which, notwithstanding, God rightly requireth of us. The law, therefore, justifieth not, but condemneth, according to that saying, 'Cursed is he that abideth not in all things that are written in this book.'" "For the law always accuseth and terrifieth, saying, 'Thou didst never accomplish all that is commanded in the law; but accursed is he that hath not done all things contained therein.' Wherefore these terrors remain still in the conscience, and remain more and more." And thus, in effect, is the law established. The greater is the excellence of the law, the greater is the evil of sin. If to give the law were right, so it

is to require obedience. A holy lawgiver can admit no compromise with sin. Man must therefore obey the law, or be condemned by it. But, if the Scriptures be received as a standard, man now, through what is emphatically termed "the fall," is incapable of rendering the required obedience without divine assistance; which supposes an interposition of grace, for which, of course, the law makes no provision. The law *condemns* him. How then can he be *justified*? That is, how shall the sin which the law declares, detects, and condemns, be pardoned? Most assuredly NOT by God as administering the law, and governing by means of it.

Two great facts the Scriptures reveal on this subject: first, that the forgiveness of sins is the free gift of God's mercy; and, secondly, that for a demonstration and exposition of his governing righteousness, the incarnate Son of God, offering himself on the cross as a sacrifice for sin, and suffering in the place of the sinner, is "set forth as a propitiation." Here, therefore, is another economy, another *house-law*, which the sovereign Father of the human family imposes. He thus constitutes his throne "the throne of grace," and administers mercy not arbitrarily, but according to a plan devised by wisdom and effected by love. The proper type of the eternal Lord is found, not in his descent on Sinai as lawgiver, but in the symbol of his merciful presence in the temple, the Shekinah on the mercy-seat.

The question resolves itself to this, How is man to approach the mercy-seat? How is he to come to God for pardon, the pardon which constitutes him righteous by the removal of guilt? Had he had no guilt to be removed, righteousness would have been the natural

result of his own obedience ; but now, having contracted the guilt, he must be reckoned, accounted, dealt with as righteous ; in other words, righteousness must be imputed to him.

Luther had studied the subject thoroughly ; and he clearly saw that the condition on which pardon was received was in perfect agreement with the manner in which pardon was offered. It was to be so received as to declare, on the part of the receiver, the rich, the free, the unmerited mercy from which it proceeded. In Scriptural language, he saw that *it was of faith, because it was of grace* ; and therefore that faith itself was a direct trust in Christ, as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind. On this point he speaks both clearly and strongly. “This heavenly righteousness is given us of God, without our works or deservings.” “Wherefore the afflicted and troubled conscience hath no remedy against desperation and eternal death, unless it take hold of the forgiveness of sins by grace, freely offered in Christ Jesus.” “We say that there is nothing in us that is able to deserve grace and the forgiveness of sins ; but we preach that we obtain this grace by the free mercy of God only for Christ’s sake.” In reference to the favourite doctrine of the Papists, that faith justified as it was connected and furnished with charity, he says, “That faith which apprehendeth Christ the Son of God, *and is furnished with him*, is the faith which justifieth.” “Faith therefore justifieth, because it apprehendeth and possesseth this treasure.” “Wherefore it is a great matter by faith to lay hold upon Christ, bearing the sins of the world. And this faith alone is counted for righteousness.” “This is the true way to become a Christian, even to be justified



by faith in Jesus Christ, without the works of the law.”

That in thus speaking of faith, he overlooked not the proper necessity of good works, in their right order, innumerable passages from his works might be quoted to prove. As an example, one brief but very comprehensive paragraph may be given. “We grant that we must teach also good works and charity, but it must be done in time and place; that is to say, when the question is concerning works, and toucheth not this article of justification. But *here* the question is, by what means we are justified and attain eternal life? To *this* we answer, with St. Paul, that by faith only in Christ we are pronounced righteous, and not by the works of the law.” He strove laboriously to keep the distinction in view. “We do not here dispute whether we ought to do good works; whether the law be holy, good, and just; whether it ought to be kept, or not; for this is another manner of question. But our question is concerning justification, and whether the law do *justify* us, or no.” He thus connects the two: “Faith taketh hold of Christ. And whosoever shall be found having this confidence in Christ apprehended in the heart, him will God account for righteous. This is the mean, and this is the merit, whereby we attain the remission of sins and righteousness. ‘Because thou believest in me,’ saith the Lord, ‘and thy faith layeth hold upon Christ, whom I have freely given unto thee, that he might be thy Mediator and High Priest, therefore, be thou justified and righteous.’ Wherefore God doth accept or account us as righteous only for our faith in Christ. When we have thus taught faith in Christ, then do we teach also good works. Because thou hast

laid hold upon Christ by faith, through whom thou art made righteous, begin now to work well; love God and thy neighbour; call upon God; give thanks unto him; praise him; confess him. These are good works indeed, which flow out of this faith and this cheerfulness conceived in the heart, for that we have remission of sins freely by Christ. And what cross or affliction doth afterward ensue, they are easily borne, and cheerfully suffered. For the yoke that Christ layeth upon us is sweet, and his burden easy. When sin is pardoned, and the conscience delivered from the burden and sting of sin, then may a Christian bear all things easily. Because he feeleth all things within sweet and comfortable, therefore he doeth and suffereth all things willingly. But when a man walketh in his own righteousness, whatsoever he doeth is grievous and tedious unto him, because he doeth it unwillingly."

Of this "doctrine of grace and salvation," he says, that "it approveth and establisheth civil government, household government, and all kinds of life that are ordained and appointed of God. It rooteth up all doctrines of error, sedition, confusion, and such like; and it putteth away the fear of sin and death. And, to be short, it discovereth all the subtle sleights and works of the devil, and openeth the benefits and love of God toward us in Christ."

Thus viewing the gospel method of justifying the ungodly, it will not be wondered that he regarded it as the chief cardinal doctrine to be exhibited by preachers to their hearers. "For if we neglect the article of justification, we lose all together. Therefore, most necessary it is, chiefly, and above all things, that we teach and repeat this article continually, like as Moses

says of his law ; for it cannot be beaten into our ears enough, or too much." "This is the truth of the gospel. It is the principal article of all Christian doctrine, wherein the knowledge of all godliness consisteth. Most necessary it is, therefore, that we should know this article ourselves, and teach it unto others continually." "As touching charity, we ought to be soft, and more flexible than the reed or leaf that is shaken with the wind, and ready to yield to everything. As concerning faith, we ought to be invincible, and more hard, if need be, than the adamant stone. Wherefore, God assisting me, my forehead shall be more hard than all men's foreheads. Here I take upon me this title, according to the proverb, *Cedo nulli*, 'I give place to none.'

These quotations may be closed by one which sums up the whole, and shows his accuracy and carefulness : "So we at this day do not reject fasting and other good exercises as damnable things ; but we teach that by these exercises we do not obtain remission of sins. When the people hear this, by and by they judge us to speak against good works. And this opinion the Papists do confirm and increase by their preachings and writings. But they lie, and do us great wrong. For many years past, there was never any that taught more sound and godly doctrine as touching good works than we do at this day."

The nature of Luther's attack on the Papacy will now be clearly understood. Others before him had seen, acknowledged, and lamented the gross corruptions which were spread over the whole church, affecting both head and members ; and the abuses which they attempted not to deny, they had often sought to remove. But they saw not the source whence the

whole corruption proceeded. Even among the more thoughtful, *justification* was confounded with *sanctification*; and by the few who held justification by faith at all, faith was only regarded as a germinant principle of obedience; that is to say, of righteousness in heart and life. These earlier complainants, therefore, only struck at separate branches of corruption; and to their other complaints this was soon added, that all their efforts were in vain.

Luther, on the contrary, ascertained first of all the great truth which the church was required to hold; and all that contravened this, he judged, for that reason, to be error. He struck at the root rather than at the branches; and by striking at the root, struck most effectually at the branches. He saw that remission of sins was God's gift, through the all-perfect merits of the only Saviour, and received by a faith which had that Saviour, in his redeeming character, as its direct object. This he knew to be right; and all that was inconsistent with it he knew to be wrong. With the principles thus furnished him, he entered upon the question of indulgences; and with the same principles he proceeded in those further inquiries which his opponents forced upon him. These principles, too, he traced, carefully and slowly, to their legitimate results; and the unavoidable consequence was, that a religious system rose before him utterly at variance with the Papacy, but which, at first to his great astonishment, he found clearly taught in the Scriptures of truth. And this was enough for him who took this ground, "Neither ought any doctrine to be taught or heard in the church beside the pure word of God, that is to say, the Holy Scripture."

## CHAPTER IV.

WE have already pointed out the falsehood of the absurd story by which some of the lower advocates of the Papacy have sought to reproach the memory of Luther, and to destroy his reputation for single-mindedness and integrity, by representing his opposition to Tetzal as proceeding from jealousy and envy. We have shown that it was occasioned by his devotion to the truth of God, which the traffic conducted by Tetzal virtually denied, and which that unhappy man actually denied both in his preaching, and by the theses which he pretended to have established. At first, this opposition referred to Tetzal alone, and to the propositions which he had undertaken to support; but as others, who came to the aid of this seller of Papal indulgences, chose to attack his assailant, it soon became evident that Luther must either retire from the position which he had taken up, or that he must defend it against all comers. As he had not undertaken his task from the love of disputation, but from devotion to the truth of the gospel, he felt himself obliged in conscience to persevere. No matter by whom he might be attacked; truth was to be defended. No matter what new views might open before him; truth was to be obediently followed. Nor was controversy all. Toward the close of 1517, Tetzal, the inquisitor, in one of the suburbs of Frankfort, after a solemn procession, first inveighed most furiously against Luther from the pulpit, declaring that he ought to be burned alive as a heretic, and then cast his pro-

positions and sermons into the fire. A century before, notwithstanding the plighted faith of the emperor Sigismund, the Council of Constance had condemned John Huss to the flames, whither, in a very brief space, he was followed by Jerome of Prague. But by none of these things was Luther moved. They who only judge of him from the warmth of his language, and regard him as a bold though successful innovator, form an erroneous conception of his character. He was bold, but he was steady. He thought with serious calmness; and then he acted not only with vigour, but, if necessary, with daring. His was the courage of conscience. Before all things, and at the hazard of all things, truth was to be defended and spread; and by the maintenance and diffusion of truth men were to be taught how they might serve God, and save their souls. Up to a certain point he knew that he was right; and he now stood prepared to learn the further lessons which might open before him. As far as he knew the truth, he obeyed it, preached it, contended for it; and ere long he became a memorable instance for the illustration of the scripture, "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord."

The court of Rome was too closely connected with Tetzels, and too deeply implicated in his schemes, to allow him to be attacked with impunity. The pope seems at first to have regarded the controversy with that good-humoured contempt which his skeptical indifference would be very likely to occasion. But they who were on the spot perceived more distinctly the real posture of affairs. They saw plainly that if Luther were not silenced, the sale of indulgences would cease. They could not conceal from themselves that

his conversion or his punishment had become essential to the safety of their own cause. Even the emperor Maximilian was convinced that the controversy was not a merely wrangling dispute, but one that, unless checked, threatened serious and extensive innovation. He wrote, therefore, to the pope, assuring him that his interference had now become necessary.

Humanly speaking, everything depended on the character of Papal interposition. Luther's opinions on the supremacy of the bishop of Rome had undergone no change whatever. He regarded the pope as the earthly and visible monarch of the church; and it would have been easy for Leo to interfere in such a manner as to secure his continued allegiance. A very little cunning might have prevented the incipient Reformation from advancing another step. But they did not understand Luther at Rome. He might not as yet see far, but he saw clearly as far as he saw at all. The consequences of his principles were not before him, but the principles themselves were. It is a remarkable circumstance that his attention was so long directed, and almost exclusively, to those great truths which involve the most important consequences. These he studied. With their evidences he made himself thoroughly acquainted. And when assailed by Tetzl, Hochstraten, Prierias, and subsequently by Eck,\* they all felt that he stood as on a rock, though they knew not the secret of his strength. His grand principle was, the attainment of evangelical righteousness and peace by faith in the blood of Christ; and, for the defence of this great principle, he appealed directly to

\* Latinized into Eckius, or Eccius.

the Scriptures, as the word of God, and the standard of truth.

Thus opened the year 1518. While the Roman court was deliberating on the information which its correspondents had communicated, the advocates of the established system were doing all in their power, not indeed meaning this, to show Luther what consequences unavoidably followed the principles he had embraced. Eck, especially, contributed to this. He was professor of divinity at Ingolstadt, and argued on the principles of the scholastic divinity; but his weapons were worse than useless in contest with an opponent who, *in that age*, could say, "The sovereign pontiff is a man, and may be deceived; but God is truth, and deceived he cannot be."\* So again, arguing against the *scholastic* doctor, and supposing that he would readily allow it to be the height of audacity for any one to teach as the philosophy of Aristotle, what he was not able to prove by the authority of Aristotle, he presses home the rule as equally applicable to the doctrines of religion:—"Much rather is it the most impudent audacity to assert in the church, and among Christians, what Christ has never taught."†

It deserves notice, that about the same time he published several popular tracts, designed to instruct the simple and unlearned in what appeared to him to be the true principles of religion. Thus, as he had preached at Wittenberg sermons on the Lord's prayer

\* Homo est summus Pontifex, falli potest; sed veritas est Deus, qui falli non potest.

† Longè ergo impudentissima omnium temeritas est, aliquid in ecclesiâ asserere, et inter Christianos, quod non docuit Christus.



and ten commandments not long before, he now printed them, that they might "run through the land."

Early in 1518 the order to which he belonged held its chapter at Heidelberg. While there, he wrote some theses, which, according to the custom of the age, he offered to maintain by public disputation. These, that he might produce the deeper impression, he proposed in the form of "paradoxes." Thus,—“1. The law of God is a salutary rule of life; and yet it cannot help man in his search after righteousness, but, on the contrary, impedes him.” “26. The law says, ‘Do this,’ and it is not done. Grace says, ‘Believe in him,’ and immediately all is done.”\* The disputations were numerously attended, the deepest interest was excited, and among the auditors seed was sown which bore invaluable fruit. Bucer, then a young man, and chaplain to the elector Palatine, heard the Wittenberg professor with fixed attention, and received the light of truth and grace. Two other young men, of the names of Brentz and Snepf, were affected in like manner, and before long became helpers to the cause of the infant Reformation.

Returning from Heidelberg, he wrote some explanations, *solutions* he termed them, of the theses he had before published. In these he speaks very respectfully of Leo; but the man who could write thus,—“It is impossible for a man to be a Christian without having Christ; and if he has Christ, he has at the same time all that is in Christ. Christ lays his hand upon us, and we are healed; he casts his mantle on us, and we

\* Lex dicit, Fac hoc; et nunquam fit. Gratia dicit, Crede in hunc; et jam facta sunt omnia.

are clothed; he is the glorious Saviour, blessed for ever,"—could not long continue a Romanist. In fact, he repeated with firmness, that every Christian who truly repented had remission of sins without any indulgence; that the pope could only do what might be done by the lowest priest,—declare the forgiveness that God had already granted; that the treasury of the merits of saints was a pure fiction; and that Holy Scripture was the sole rule of faith.

Still fearing to act wrong, on the 30th of May he wrote to the pope. In this letter he adverts to the demoralized state of the church, the fearful effects of the sale of indulgences, and his own part in the controversy. He speaks of himself as maintaining the honour of the church, not as promoting heresy. "I cannot retract what I have said," was still his language; but he nevertheless most pathetically appeals to Leo, and calls on him to decide in the fear of God. "Wherefore, most blessed father, I present myself prostrate at the feet of your blessedness, with all that I am and have: vivify, slay; call, recall; approve, condemn, as it may please you. I will acknowledge your voice as that of Christ presiding and speaking in you. If I have merited death, I will not refuse to die."

This submissive language, however, was of no avail. Already had attempts been made to deprive him of the favour and protection of Duke Frederic; and pending the consideration of the remonstrances which he had addressed in his own defence to Leo, a weightier influence had been busy in fomenting the Papal wrath against him. The emperor Maximilian, a monarch not at all conspicuous either for his virtues or abilities, but yet generally good-humoured and easy, began to

take alarm at the rapid spread of the Lutheran innovations in various parts of his dominions. He had been, indeed, one of the most zealous instigators in the pope's interposition; and now stimulated him to the adoption of harsher processes. In a strain of fierce and blundering invective, this prince took occasion to denounce Luther and his supporters, in the diet of the empire, which was holden at Augsburg in the summer of 1518; and on the 7th of August he was served with a citation to appear, within sixty days, at Rome, there to defend himself from the charges that were laid against him. The bishop of Ascula, Girolamo de Genutiis, by whom, in his capacity of auditor of the chamber, the summons had been executed, was further instructed earnestly to exhort the elector Frederic to maintain inviolate his allegiance to the church, and to afford no countenance to one who was at least most seriously suspected of heresy.

Impatient for the extirpation of the liberal notions which, emanating from Wittenberg, were fast scattering themselves through the empire, Maximilian now despatched a missive to Leo, prompting him to proceed with greater vigour in the cause, and engaging to see carried into effect, so far as his own power extended, whatever severities the pope, in his wisdom, might be pleased to authorize. On the receipt of the emperor's epistle, Leo, regardless of the sixty days allowed for Luther's appearance to the previous citation, immediately directed his legate at the imperial court, Thomas de Vio, cardinal of Gaëta, to cite the refractory monk of Wittenberg before him; and, should he persist in his heresies, to detain him prisoner until further orders. To complete the scandal of this pro-

ceeding, two of the bitterest of Luther's adversaries were nominated to the duty of hearing his defence, Silvester de Prierias and the bishop of Ascula. To have obeyed the mandate which required him to plead before a tribunal so iniquitously constituted, would have been to imperil, in his own person, the cause of religious truth. Availing himself, therefore, of the irregularity of the second citation, he represented to the pope the manifest injustice of the proposed form of trial; complaining, too, of the hardship of abridging the time for preparation permitted to him by the original summons to Rome. This expostulation, backed as it was by the prayer of the University of Wittenberg, and the personal interest of the elector, who contended that it was the ascertained privilege of the German states to have all questions of ecclesiastical subjection tried on their own soil, so far succeeded as to induce Leo X. to waive the two former citations, and issue a third, commanding Luther to repair to Augsburg, to be there heard before the cardinal of Gaëta. To that city, a place memorable for the conference that was now at hand, and doubly illustrated by the famous confession, of which, a few years later, it witnessed the solemn publication, did Luther journey on foot, in solitude and poverty. The world saw, in this meeting, only the arraignment of an obscure, presumptuous, and enthusiastic priest before the delegate of the highest authority on earth; and little did the Papal minister imagine, as he entered Augsburg, with all the pomp and circumstance appropriate to his mission and official dignity, amid the reverent greetings of the civil powers, that the coming investigation was to be, in effect, only the first act in the public crimination of the superb and

tyrannous hierarchy of which he was the occasional representative; or that the various grandeur which surrounded him was but prophetic of the approaching sunset and final declension of the spiritual despotism of Rome. But upon both parties was there an eye fixed, which seeth not as men see; a power overruling the event, which had decreed that the humble and poor should be exalted, and the lofty brought down to the dust.

## CHAPTER V.

THE cardinal of Gaëta, usually known in history as Cardinal Cajetan, was one of the most respectable of the ecclesiastics who were prominently engaged in opposition to the inchoate Reformation. He was able to conduct himself with great kindness and courtesy of manner; but he was known to be most thoroughly devoted to all the claims of the Roman court, as well as to all the doctrines of the Roman Church, in those grosser forms in which they were then generally received. His instructions were to bring Luther to recantation, if it were possible; but, if he continued obstinate, to keep him in safe custody till he could present him for trial before a Roman tribunal, in the ecclesiastical metropolis itself. Luther had heard some reports of this, but he was not deterred by them from proceeding. Stopping at Nuremberg, on his way to Augsburg, while some encouraged him, others, alarmed on his account, wished him to turn back. In a letter which he wrote while tarrying at Nuremberg for a brief space, he not only shows his unconquerable resolution, but the source from which his courage and strength were derived. "I have found," he says, "certain persons very fearful on my account, who endeavour to persuade me not to go on to Augsburg. But I continue fixed. *Let the will of the Lord be done.* Even at Augsburg, and *in the very midst of his enemies, Jesus Christ reigns. Let Christ live, and Martin, and any other sinner, die;* as it is written, Exalted be the God of my salvation. Farewell. Persevere standing;

*for either by God or by men we must certainly be rejected.* But God is true, and man a liar.”\* Thus early did he take his ground as a man of one object, one aim, one care. Whatever became of himself, all his desire was that the name of God might be honoured, and the truth of Christ triumphantly spread. He might be warm from natural temperament, but he was courageous from principle. His friends, however, would not allow him to appear before Cajetan till he had obtained an ample safe-conduct for *going* and *RETURNING*: the infamous quibble in the case of Huss was not forgotten. In the mean time, while waiting for the necessary document, one of the Italians called on him, and appeared anxious that he should *at once* and *privately* wait upon the cardinal; but Luther, happily, allowed himself to be governed by his advisers.

The safe-conduct being received, Luther presented himself before Cajetan; and, according to established etiquette, not only knelt, but literally prostrated himself before him; continuing thus till he was bid to rise. The cardinal was courteous, but decided. Luther was to retract. But he understood not the man. Courteously, but with equal decision, the monk required the cardinal to *show him wherein he had erred*. In reply,

\* Homines aliquot pusillanimes in mea causa inveni, ita ut me tentare quoque cœperint, ne adirem Augustam. Verum ego persto fixus. Fiat voluntas Domini. Etiam Augustæ, etiam in medio inimicorum suorum, dominatur Jesus Christus. Vivat Christus; moriatur Martinus, et omnis peccator, sicut scriptum est, Exaltetur autem Deus salutis meæ. Valete bene, et perseverate stantes; quia necesse est vel ab hominibus vel à Deo reprobari. Sed est Deus verax, homo autem mendax.—Weismann quotes this letter as having himself read it in MS. *Hist. Sac. N. T.*, sec. xvi, § 44, vii. 3.

he was told that he must retract these two propositions:—"The treasure of indulgences does not consist of the merits and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ.—The man who receives the holy sacrament must have faith in the grace offered him." The parties were now completely at issue. "You are wrong," said Cajetan, "and must recant." "Prove that I am wrong, and I will," said the undaunted professor of Wittenberg. Several interviews took place, in which, at first, Cajetan thought to secure an easy victory by repeating the usual Papal common-places in support of the subjects in debate, but he was utterly unprepared for Luther's appeal to the word of God. Unable to fix mistake on a single proposition, he laid aside the controversialist, and assumed the tone of the superior and judge. He lost his temper, threatened to send Luther to Rome, and abruptly terminated the discourse by forbidding Luther to appear in his presence again, unless he were prepared fully to abandon his errors.

This, perhaps, was one of the most critical periods of the Reformation. Luther was not yet well-informed on many subjects with which he subsequently became acquainted. His respect for the pope, in regard to his office, was high, and his desire of peace strong. He was willing to make any concessions that did not involve the truth which he knew and felt that he had embraced. It is important, to the right explanation of some of his proceedings while at Augsburg, that the actual state of his mind be understood. He was accustomed to acknowledge that he "did not learn all his divinity at once, but was constrained to sink deeper and deeper;" and among the subjects thus only gradually perceived, the supremacy of the Roman see was



one. "The pope said, 'Although Christ be the head of the church, yet, notwithstanding, there must be a visible and corporeal head of the church on earth.' *With this I could have been well content,* IN CASE HE HAD BUT TAUGHT THE GOSPEL PURELY AND CLEARLY, and had not brought forward human inventions and lies instead thereof."\* Luther's first object was the truth of the gospel,—the truth by which men are to be saved,—EVANGELICAL TRUTH. Could this have been secured, he would never have thought of assailing the Papal monarchy.

Cajetan, when Luther had departed, felt dissatisfied with himself. Instead of persuading Luther to recant, he had made him a more determined opponent; and he had allowed him to escape from his power, without being able to induce him to undertake a journey to Rome. He sent, therefore, for Staupitz, the friend of Leo, and the head of his order, and begged him to use his utmost influence to persuade him to submit. Staupitz, with others, advised Luther to make some concessions; and thus persuaded, on the 17th of October, soon after the final interview, he wrote to Cajetan in very submissive terms, retracting all roughnesses of expression, referring all matters to the pope, and offering to be silent, provided silence on the other side was observed also. Speaking of those days, in after-life, he said, "If the cardinal had handled me with more discretion at Augsburg, and had dealt kindly with me when I fell at his feet, then it had never come thus far; for at that time I saw very few of the pope's errors which now I see. Had he been silent, so had I probably held my peace."†

\* Table-talk.

† Table-talk.

To this submissive letter Cajetan sent no reply. It contained no retractation, and nothing short of this would he accept. Luther, therefore, not feeling himself any longer safe at Augsburg, drew up an appeal from the pope ill-informed, to the pope better-informed : and early in the morning of the 19th of October he left the city, on a horse which had been prepared for him, and returned as rapidly as possible to Wittenberg.

Cajetan now wrote to the elector Frederic, claiming the victory in the discussions that had taken place, and calling on the duke either to send the refractory monk a prisoner to Rome, or at least to banish him from the ducal territories. Frederic would do neither. As yet he knew little or nothing of Luther's doctrines ; but he knew his virtues and reputation, and he saw how great were the benefits he had conferred on the recently-founded university. Frederic knew, too, the grievances under which Germany laboured and groaned through the Papal administration, and its tyrannous rapacity. He contented himself, therefore, with a reply in general terms, amounting to what Luther had so repeatedly declared : " PROVE the errors which you allege."

Matters now proceeded more rapidly, and all in one direction. In November Leo published an edict, not, indeed, mentioning Luther's name, but deciding what may be termed the indulgence question ; re-asserting all that had been claimed, and all that Luther had controverted. The pope was thus gradually drawing the attention of the reformer to ulterior questions. In the same month he solemnly and formally appealed from the decisions of the pope to a general council, the representative of the Catholic Church, and the pope's

superior. And thus closed the year 1518. Much light had been diffused through Germany on the agitated questions, and very many were the admirers of the professor of Wittenberg. Esteemed and beloved by the students and officers of the university, of which he was a principal light and ornament, his most strenuous efforts were directed, and not unsuccessfully, to the advancement of divine truth. And in this work he was aided by one, then little more than a youth, who became subsequently one of his most valuable coadjutors in the work of reformation, and whose name, only second to his own, seems naturally to occur in connection with it. Born at Bretten, in the Palatinate, in 1497, Philip Schwarzerd had clearly established his character as a scholar. In 1514 he was made doctor; and in 1518, the University of Wittenberg, having for its professor of divinity Doctor MARTIN LUTHER, had for its professor of ancient languages a youth little more than twenty-one years of age, pleasing in appearance, but diminutive in person, that young man being PHILIP MELANCTHON.

## CHAPTER VI.

WHEN the year 1519 opened, all things appeared to threaten the unflinching reformer with an unfavourable crisis. Leo had decided the question of indulgences against him; and as he had been prompted to interference by the emperor himself, it was not likely that the secular power would refuse its aid to the ecclesiastical. Frederic, too, though aware of Luther's value, and most affectionately disposed toward him, had not yet examined the religious part of the question so as to have his own conscience engaged on the side of these innovations, as they were described by their opponents; nor was it to be expected that a single elector should undertake to resist the forces of the whole empire.

But He, who is as wonderful in counsel as he is mighty in working, so ordered and overruled the course of events, that the occurrences of the next few months visibly served the cause, the extinction of which just before had appeared all but certain. Toward the close of the year 1518, the declining health of Maximilian set on foot a multitude of intrigues, in various quarters, having for their object to ensure the election of some favoured competitor for the imperial crown. Pending the fermentation consequent on these negotiations, and the busy outlook for the conservation of its own interests by the Roman hierarchy, Luther's contumacy was suffered to remain unnoticed. The interval was not lost to the reformers. Availing themselves of the momentary abeyance of the vigilant malignity of their adversary, they spared no effort to scatter far and wide

a knowledge of their arguments and doctrines. The emperor's death, which occurred in February, 1519, devolved a temporary and vicarial supremacy upon the elector Frederic, under whose friendly and liberal administration the Lutheran opinions gained converts daily. Magnanimously declining for himself the proffered throne, Frederic threw his influence with the electoral body into the scale opposed to the pretensions of the French monarch, Francis; and, by thus procuring the preference of his illustrious rival, established an effectual and peculiar interest in the councils of the successful candidate. Upon the elevation of Charles V., both of the contending parties in the great religious struggle were alike and naturally solicitous to propitiate his countenance. The pope, indeed, affected to have been chiefly instrumental in securing his nomination, and on the credit of this pretended service founded a claim to the cordial co-operation of the new emperor in crushing the spiritual insurrection which had sprung up at Wittenberg. Some misgiving of the policy of his last decretal, mixed, perhaps, with an anticipation of adverse promptings on the part of the prince elector, who was known to stand high in the imperial regard, seem, nevertheless, to have awakened Leo to the prudence of again trying what the intervention of a sagacious and more temperate mediator could accomplish toward a reconciliation of the difference with Luther. With this view he selected, as his legate extraordinary, for the settlement of the questions recently and still in agitation, Charles, Count Miltitz, a Saxon nobleman, who, having served for some years as a soldier of the church, had been subsequently raised to the dignities of councillor and apostolic chamberlain. Upon the

various accomplishments and diplomatic address of his ambassador Leo appears to have relied with confidence, for the speedy and amicable adjustment of the unusual kind of warfare in which he was involved; while he trusted that the distinguished reputation and Saxon birth of Miltitz would bespeak a favourable predisposition in the elector toward himself and his projects, and influence the reforming party to comply with his demands, by abandoning their obnoxious principles. Another circumstance, which was not unlikely to render the new emissary peculiarly acceptable to that party, was the intercession which, at the request of the University of Wittenberg, he had previously used to obtain for Luther a hearing within the German territory. It is, moreover, not improbable that among the motives which prompted the choice of a civil negotiator in preference to a churchman, was a hope of thereby evading those interminable subtleties and disputations in which an ecclesiastical nuncio would have been sure to get entangled, to the imminent hazard of widening the breach, and still further exacerbating the temper of the recusants. That in this arrangement there is evidence of the native and indolent lenity of Leo's character, and of considerable reluctance to be hurling at his humble opponent the thunders of the spiritual power, we have no wish to insinuate a doubt; but we think we see in it, at the same time, no unequivocal indications of that shrinking from the test of argument, investigation, and publicity, which is the sure attendant and betrayer of every form of tyranny.

Among the solemn fooleries of the palmy days of the pontificate, was a custom (which, for aught we know, may have survived the wreck of the Roman

Church's grandeur) of annually presenting to some eminent personage a consecrated rose, as a token of the pope's particular esteem. Of this signal mark of favour, Frederic was understood, or rather was presumed, to be ambitious ; though, in all probability, there were few men in Europe who less cared to accept it. To him, therefore, did Leo this year commission his native subject, the count Miltitz, to carry the sacred bauble, together with an epistolary commendation of its prescriptive value, as a symbol of the especial favour of the church, and a strenuous exhortation to promote the satisfactory discharge of the mission of the bearer. The envoy's reception at the electoral court was anything but auspicious. The consecrated trifle, for which time had been when kings would have contended almost to the death, Frederic declined to undergo the usual ceremony of publicly receiving, and requested that it might be delivered to one of the officers of his household to be conveyed to him. Nor did the high recommendations which the Papal nuncio brought with him to Pfeffinger and Spalatin, two of the prince's ministers, and both friends of Luther, avail to remove the distrust of the pope's intentions, which the last exorbitant and ill-judged proclamation had aroused. To the expostulations and attempts of Miltitz to enlist him on the side of the church, Frederic listened with evident disinclination ; and at last replied, as coldly as decidedly, that he would be no party to the oppression of a man whom he had heretofore considered blameless.

Thus foiled in what was really, though not ostensibly, the primary purpose of his embassy, to wean the elector from his suspected predilection for the Lutheran cause, Miltitz saw that the only chance of winning back the

protesting champion to his ancient allegiance, lay in the dubious practicability of persuading him to lend an ear to the covert concessions and pacific overtures of Leo. Accordingly he sought, and, not without difficulty, (for Luther had by this time armed and made up his mind to the struggle which he deemed to be inevitable,) at last gained admittance to a personal interview at Altenberg. Conformably to his instructions, he abstained from all approach to the debate of theological points, and confined his endeavours to the single object of persuading Luther to desist from his vehement oppugnance to the see of Rome. Admitting, and professing to deplore, the numerous abuses which had flowed from the publication of the indulgences, he even went so far as to summon before him Tetzel, the original provoker of the whole series of discords that for three years had disturbed the public peace, and so severely reprehended him for his past virulence and misconduct, that the unhappy Dominican is said to have soon afterward died of an illness occasioned by his vexation and alarm at the threats and reproaches which were heaped upon him.\* Count Miltitz and the reformer met again in the castle of Liebenwer, and a third time at Lichtenberg; when the sagacity and earnest entreaties of the former at length prevailed on Luther once more to address the pope in a strain of great

\* It should not be omitted, that Luther wrote to Tetzel, as soon as he heard of his sickness, offering him a frank oblivion of their former quarrel, and expressing his regret for any asperities of language which he might have used. At the same time, he exhorted his old, but now fallen, antagonist to keep up his spirits, and especially to fear nothing from the writer's resentment. Tetzel, however, did not live to acknowledge or repay the honourable kindness of his opponent.



humility ; supplicating pardon for the irreverence and irascibility which he was thought to have exhibited before ; deprecating any needless disturbance of the peace of the church, and binding himself to refrain from subsequent disputation on the subject of indulgences, provided that his opponents also should be, on their side, compelled to cease from discussion, *and that it should be understood that the church was not responsible for their actions*. Luther was still anxious to preserve the visible unity of the church, and did not as yet see how deeply the fundamental errors which he attacked had penetrated. His letter to Leo (written in March, 1519,) is rather *deprecatory* than *retractory* : it afforded, however, ground for reconciliation, had his opponents been willing to be silent. But as they were resolved to concede *nothing*, so Luther was led to examine *everything* ; and he thus discovered errors and corruptions where, even when at an earlier period he saw mistakes, he was willing to believe them to be only venial ones.

But what a conscious humiliation, and defect of moral strength, must a few months of study and eloquent resistance have wrought in the secret heart of the magnificent and haughty Leo, when stipulations such as these could be proposed to him, under the implied sanction of his own representative, as indispensable preliminaries to the capitulation of a disobedient friar, too poor to purchase a surplice,\* and residing in a remote province of his spiritual empire !

\* For within a few weeks from this period, we find him requesting the elector to provide him with two, a white and a black one, to enable him to make a decent appearance at Leipsic ; he being destitute of the means of buying them.

The pope, however, did not think it prudent to reject even these provisional submissions from a man in whose invincible fortitude and energy of character, surrounded as he was by an applauding circle of able and devoted friends, were visible the seeds of a much larger and more aggressive enmity than it was at all desirable to invite. The mild and approving tone of Leo's reply encouraged the hopes of Miltitz that, by his mediation, would at last be effected the conclusion of those feuds which had so long vexed the general repose of Christendom. But events were in progress which tended to precipitate the crisis, and to extinguish those hopes for ever.

Carlostadt, archdeacon of the cathedral at Wittenberg, (whose real name was Andrew Bodenstein,) having published a thesis in defence of the opinions maintained by Luther, had again called into the field of polemical battle the learned and astute, but intemperate and vindictive, Doctor John Eccius, or Eck. After expending on each other the customary amenities of theological strife, it was ultimately agreed between the combatants that they should meet in the city of Leipsic, to decide the controversy by oral disputation, in presence of George, duke of Saxony, uncle to the elector Frederic, and other illustrious personages; Hoffmann, the principal of the University of Leipsic, being, by mutual consent, elected to sit as umpire. As the duke, on the first application to him for that purpose, declined to permit Luther to take an active part in the debate, he tells us that he expected to have been only a spectator. But to have suffered him to remain silent would have frustrated the great object of the challenge; a challenge which indeed had been thrown

out by Eck, in the expectation that, by it, he should gain incidentally an opportunity of engaging Luther, and winning to his own merits the grateful attention of the pontifical court. Eck therefore made it his business to procure for him a license similar to that which had been previously extended to Carlostadt; and Luther was not the man to balk the pugnacity of an assailant, whose eminent talents were eclipsed only by the fanatical remorselessness of his intolerance, and the frantic vehemences of his temper.

Few passages in Luther's life have been more commonly misconstrued than his sentiments and conduct on the occasion of this far-famed dispute. It has been taken for granted that, equally with Carlostadt, who was his friend and follower, he stood pledged to precisely the same propositions which the latter upheld against the attacks of Eck. But the fact is, that the argument between those persons was expressly confined to a single issue, relating to the freedom of the human will. The limitation of their mutual reasoning to this particular and exclusive topic had been prearranged by the conflicting parties before Luther could have had any thought of being personally drawn into the arena. It is to be remembered, too, that neither had the two reforming divines been both included in the original challenge, nor did Luther attempt to interfere in any way with the contest, which lasted for six days, on the old and much-vexed problem of the moral liberty of mankind. It was not until that contest had closed that he opposed himself to the Romanist advocate; and then it will be found that the subjects to which he addressed his discourse were widely different from the abstruse perplexities of the antecedent

question. We lay peculiar stress upon these circumstances, because we have been at some pains to satisfy ourselves that, up to the date of the Leipsic controversy, Luther had never been committed to the predestinarian creed. It is very generally supposed that in the former part of his career, as in the latter and solitary instance of his grand dispute with Erasmus, the father of the Reformation leaned to the faith of Augustine, respecting the divine decrees; a supposition which has not unnaturally arisen from the known determination of the early belief of Melancthon, and others of his fellow-labourers. That Luther, in the outset of his theological investigations, received a bias in that direction from the works of Augustine, is very probable. But to any one who will be at the trouble to consult the various writings of the reformer, it will appear that, even in those places which afford the most inviting and appropriate opportunities for introducing the notion of predestination, he had hitherto uniformly shrunk from an avowal of that dogma. We have, besides, his own confession, that he regarded the metaphysical subtleties which of necessity invest the doctrine as unprofitable, and not altogether free from danger; a statement that agrees far better with his aboriginal aversion to the mazes of the scholastic logic, than with his subsequent and short-lived adhesion to a tenet which, from that logic, draws its armour, and least vulnerable proofs. Nor let it be objected to us that the silence of Luther on this point infers nothing against his alleged approbation of a sentiment which was even then stoutly maintained by more than one of his adherents. It is strikingly inconsistent with the unflinching sincerity and outspoken plainness of his

character, to assume that, on a topic which lay so obvious, and which, moreover, might have so nearly and so easily allied itself to the very foundations of his speculative divinity, he should have remained invariably mute, had he inclined to the affirmative view of the question. On the other hand, there were many reasons which might fairly, as we apprehend they in effect did, operate to prevent the utterance of a peremptory denial of the predestinative scheme. In the first place, we cannot doubt that, in common with his conventual brethren, Luther cherished an extraordinary reverence for the memory and teachings of Augustine. To have openly abjured a doctrine, upon which a father, who was almost their oracle, had so strenuously insisted as the basis of the Scriptural theory of justification, would have been gratuitously to run the hazard, by alarming an amiable prejudice, of alienating from his infant councils some of the best and brightest of his monastic allies. With Carlostadt the case was different. He was an *emeritus* disciple of the Aristotelian metaphysic before he became a Lutheran in religion. His theology was cast in the genuine scholastic mould; his reason habitually overlaid with the cumbrous and constricting forms of the syllogistic method,—a method which to Luther was uncongenial and abhorrent. It was like armour on the limbs of a Scythian giant. It cramped the muscular play and robust activity of his understanding. He loved to handle things without the intervention of the scales of the gauntlet; to test them, not by the pedantic rules of artificial demonstration, but by their impression on the natural sensibilities of the heart and conscience. Logic with him was not the mere formal art of com-

bining and expressing dependant propositions, though in the practical uses of *that* art few men were more expert, but a native and abiding canon of the intelligent being. He knew, in short, what the schoolmen had all along lost sight of, that there are certain truths of consciousness and feeling which have a deeper import, and a more obligatory sacredness, than belongs to any of the clearest results of mere ratiocination; which are, in fact, the *axioms* of moral science, the preliminary *data* and conditions of every form of human knowledge.\*

\* Thus, for example, our consciousness of being is a truth antecedent and superior to all acquired information. A mathematical axiom—for example, *that the whole is equal to its parts, and vice versâ*—is propounded to me. I apprehend its truth. But this apprehension presupposes an anterior truth, namely, that *I*, the subject apprehending, *exist*. But that truth is not demonstrable. Why? For the same reason that neither is the mutual equality of the whole and its constituent parts susceptible of demonstration. It is a truth *in limine*, and indispensable to other and secondary truth: as thus, If I am not, then it is not true that I apprehend. The canon involved in this formula is fatal to the necessitarian argument. The freedom of the will is a truth transcendental and preliminary, and necessarily assumed in every truth of morals. It is useless to dispute about it, and absurd: if it be false, the very idea of truth is a fabrication and a dream. But after all, why conjure up fantastical personations, and in our so-called philosophy represent ourselves to be made up of a collection of various faculties, which can only be dealt with as so many individual and separate things? What do we mean by *will*? The most ordinary form of speech is the most philosophically exact. "*I will*:" not *the will* (that is a something which is not *I*, but only pertaining to me) *wills*,—but *I; the self, the man* Upon this favourite problem of the schoolmen,—the liberty of the will,—what pages of elaborate folly have been given to the

But another and principal cause of the misconception which, in our judgment, has obtained in relation to the actual opinion at this time of Luther, regarding the freedom of man's conduct, has been the miserable ignorance of evangelical divinity, and the consequent inability of many of his historians to comprehend the real significance and gist of his doctrine as to the justificatory efficacy of faith. It is truly lamentable, and, we had almost said, *vexatious*, to think how much of perverse misapprehension on this simple and vital article of our holy religion still lingers in the Christian world. Men will persist in fancying an opposition between faith and works, and arguing that to affirm the exclusive necessity of the first, dispenses with the performance and the obligation of the latter. It might as wisely be concluded that to rear an oak, you must not only sow the acorn, but with it plant the stem, and into the stem graft the branches; as it is frequently urged, that besides, and as a separable thing from faith, there must be practical obedience to the moral law, in order

world! The usual mode of attempting to show the subjection, that is, the *non-existence*, of the will, is by referring the instant determination to some extraneous *motive*; about as circular and self-destructive an argument as ever the genius of sophisms invented. But what if, in sin, in all moral derelictions, there is, strictly speaking, *no will*,—mere and absolute *negation of will*? Yet such is the truth. All nature moves under the dominion of necessity; effect follows cause, inevitably and continually. Man, a being endowed with *power*, stands alone amidst the ever-whirling machinery, to guide himself. Circumstance acts upon him, and he falls. Say you, by his own *will*? No, for will is action; and he acts not. He *is acted upon*; he *submits to be impelled*, instead of *willing to resist*.

to salvation. Luther knew better. He had learned not to put asunder what God, in the nature of things, had joined together. By the deeds of the law he held that no flesh living could be justified. "Good works," he observes, "do not constitute a good man; but a good, or justified man, that is, a man having true and living faith, necessarily performs good works." The stigma of excluding acts of holiness and charity from the duty of a Christian believer has so often been cast upon the doctrine in question, and so often and effectually repelled, that it may seem superfluous to say more in this place, than that it can originate only in an utter misconception of the very nature and design of Christianity. As did our Saviour himself, and the apostles, so Luther taught that the moral quality of every action of men's lives depended on the principle from which it sprang, and the intimate spirit of the agent; that a mere external and ostensible compliance with the specific precepts of social morality argued no necessary rectitude and purity of heart; and that the effectual and required observance of the law could be fulfilled only by the presence and operation of that catholic love—the love of God generating love of man—which faith procures, and, by infusing into the soul, hallows and regenerates it. That this view naturally associates itself with the idea of the personal election of the saints, involving, as of necessity that idea does involve, the passive instrumentality and bondage of the will, was the mutual assumption of Carlostadt and Eck. The Papist disputant, indeed, feeling his strength upon the negative side of the consequence, was the more solicitous to tie his opponent down to



this single issue, as upon it Carlostadt had imprudently suspended the decision of the whole preliminary controversy. Both parties indeed were miserably crippled by the antagonist errors upon which they verged. The assertion by Eck, who displayed great dialectical skill, coupled with more than his customary eloquence, of the voluntary co-operation of the human being with divine grace in every act of holiness or virtue, was vitiated by his reliance on the intrinsic merit of good works: while Carlostadt virtually concluded his own refutation of the alleged efficacy of an outward and literal observance of the decalogue, by admitting that his argument conducted to a corollary which implied not only the absence of any *meritorious* property in the legal obedience of men, but dispensed with the *obligations* of the moral law altogether. It is here that the radical vice of the necessitarian theology always becomes conspicuous and revolting; nor did the subtle and prompt genius of the Romanist doctor fail to take advantage of this vulnerable place in his adversary's logic. The result of this prefatory discussion is allowed by most writers to have been not particularly favourable to Carlostadt; and from the cautious tone in which Luther more than once alludes to it, confessing that "*on some points*" Eck was victorious, we may gather additional confirmation of our belief that he was, at the time, by no means a decided advocate of predestination. In truth, we are disposed to think, that he had not so far refused to determine whether to admit or to reject the notion; and perhaps the impression left upon his judgment by the controversial speeches of Eck was, to some extent, a type of the future and more

permanent effect of the powerful reasoning of Erasmus. Certain it is that, although the subsequent discourse of Carlostadt and Melancthon availed to remove his doubts for a while, and to thrust him forward into the van of the contest with that eminent scholar, the abler of his prompters lived to retract his predestinarian opinions, acknowledging himself convinced by the labours of his illustrious opponent,—and Luther, to direct the inquirer, as to his own definitive conviction, to the works of his friend Philip.

## CHAPTER VII.

AT the time of the death of the emperor Maximilian, the infant Reformation appeared to be in imminent danger. It seemed to be very doubtful whether the duke of Saxony would be able any longer to protect his favourite professor against his now thoroughly-aroused opponents, when the change of affairs, produced by the vacancy of the empire, gave to Frederic a power which he before did not possess, and at the same time made it the interest of Leo to conciliate his regard. The threatening storm, therefore, passed away.

After the conferences with Miltitz, the danger, though of a different kind, was not less perilous to the cause of truth. To the question of indulgences, Luther, understanding as he did so thoroughly the doctrine of justification, was decidedly and conscientiously opposed; but he did not as yet clearly perceive the connection between the Papal system and the corruption which had overspread the whole western church. He had therefore written respectfully to Leo, and declared his willingness to accept of peace upon terms which would have left all the roots of corruption as firmly fixed in the soil as ever, and most of its branches flourishing as visibly as before. It was necessary that Luther should study questions which he had hitherto regarded, to a considerable degree at least, as sacred. He had glanced at them, and his glances had awakened suspicions which yet he was unwilling to indulge. But the time was approaching for him to examine the subject to its foundations, and thus either to verify his suspicions, or to discard them.

Eck had challenged Carlostadt ; but the propositions which he undertook to defend were such as he knew would bring Luther (by whom, together with Melancthon, Carlostadt was to be accompanied to Leipsic) into the controversial arena. One of these asserted the constant supremacy of the bishop of Rome as the successor of St. Peter, and the vicar of Jesus Christ. Luther, on the other hand, was studying the *decretals*, and light was arising in his mind. Writing to Spalatin, and informing him of his studies, he adds : “ Let me whisper it in your ear : I know not whether the pope be antichrist himself, or his apostle.”\* And when he read the propositions of Eck, he saw at once that, though Carlostadt was mentioned, they were really aimed at himself. “ But God reigns,” said he. “ He knows what he designs to bring out of this tragedy. It matters little how it affects Doctor Eck or me. The purpose of God must be fulfilled. Thanks to Eck, this which has hitherto been but a trifle, will in the end become a serious matter, and strike a fatal blow against the tyranny of Rome.” He published, in his turn, some counter propositions, in which he asserted the foundations of the Roman primacy to be laid in the decretals of the pontiffs themselves, and to be without warrant of Scripture. Writing to the elector, he said : “ God knows that it was my sincere intention to keep silence, and that I was rejoiced to see the contest brought to a close. I was so scrupulous in my adherence to the treaty concluded with the pope’s commissary, that I did not answer Silvester Prierias, notwithstanding the taunts of my adversaries,

\* Nescio an papa sit antichristus ipse, vel apostolus ejus.

and the advice of my friends. But now Doctor Eck attacks me ; and not me only, but the whole University of Wittenberg. I cannot allow truth to be thus loaded with opprobrium." The sword now drawn was not again returned to its scabbard. Tetzels himself, who was still alive, saw from his retreat to what this discussion tended. "It is the devil," said he, "that is urging it on."

The discussion opened on the 27th of June. The ancient hymn, "Veni, Creator Spiritus," was sung by both parties ; and then, Eck and Carlostadt having taken their places, the dispute commenced. The principal subjects of debate were those which are connected with the moral agency of man, and the influence of divine grace. The dispute continued for several days ; Eck maintaining the Pelagian view of the question, while his opponent supported opinions more conformable to those of Augustine. In a verbal discussion, chiefly governed by the rules of the scholastic logic, it was easy for each to claim the victory.

On the 4th of July, Luther, having been urged to it by his opponents, and having obtained the consent of the duke of Saxony, took the place of Carlostadt. The contention now began to assume a more serious character. One of the first topics debated was *the supremacy of the pope*. Luther, we have seen, had been driven, both by the severe denunciations of the holy see, and by the reckless imprudence of his adversaries, to examine the grounds of that mighty fiction, and finally to conclude that the pre-eminence of the bishops of Rome had no foundation in divine authority. It was to the overthrow of this proposition that Eck directed all the brilliant and specious artillery of his

rhetoric, and all the forces of his acute and ardent intellect. But he had now to deal with a stronger foe than in the preceding struggle. Less ingenious, perhaps, and versatile, but more direct and simple, as well as more learned, Luther also excelled his bold and certainly able challenger as much in nerve and grasp of understanding, as in fervid devotion and self-oblivious integrity of purpose. Confident in his own resources, Eck was stimulated to draw upon them to the utmost by the hope of some high ecclesiastical reward for his prowess in vindication of the church. But Luther had taken his stand on ground from which no ability, no power of sarcasm or vituperation could dislodge him. With sufficient readiness of retort to disarm the sting of his antagonist's taunts, prompt to repay insult with scorn, and meet irony with satirical invective, Luther's qualifications, as an actual debater, were of the most effective description. In mere eloquence, it was not easy to say which of the contending orators deserved the palm. Eck, we think, had the advantage of copiousness and boldness, and perhaps of a somewhat apter wit; while the excellence of Luther's discourse lay in its massive strength, its tone of fearless sincerity, and the pregnant simplicity of the argument which it developed. The objections which were urged by Luther to the primacy of the pope, are at the present day so familiar to all Protestant readers as almost to preclude them from duly estimating the perspicacity and independence of the mind which, steadily keeping in view the cardinal principles of Christian polity and obligation, could emancipate itself from the trammels of a servitude sanctioned by the universal submission of ages. It is worth remarking, that in his negation

of the divine origin of the Papal autocracy, Luther gave the first hint of a tendency to the opinion which he ultimately adopted relative to episcopal jurisdictions generally, and in conformity with which he discarded the office, or rather the *name* of bishop from the constitution of his own church.

But it was not alone the assumed elevation of the Roman pontiffs that came within the strife of these polemical wrestlers. Among other and almost equally-important subjects commanding their attention, was the Popish doctrine of the purgatorial state of being after death; upon which Luther now first declared that no proof of the existence of such a state could be deduced from Scripture. A third question turned upon the primitive ground of quarrel, the indulgences; and out of this grew some collateral points, regarding the nature of repentance, and the remission of punishment by the pope. The contest was prolonged for ten days, and was closed by Luther with these remarkable words: "He flees from the Scriptures as the devil does from the cross: whereas I, saving the respect due to the fathers, prefer the authority of Scripture, which I commend to those who are about to decide between us."\* Hoffmann, the arbiter, too prudent to attempt to decide between the opposing leaders, suggested that the final determination of the matters which had been mooted should be referred to the Universities of Erfurt and Paris. In the interim, each party, as is usual on all similar occasions, claimed the victory. Eck, indeed, wrote to his friend and partisan Hoogen-

\* Videtur fugere a facie Scripturarum, sicut diabolus crucem. Quare, salvis reverentiis patrum, præfero ego auctoritatem Scripturæ, quod commendo iudicibus futuris.

straaten a vain-glorious account of his assumed triumph, arrogating to himself the credit of having effectually conquered the audacious and rash gentleman of Wittenberg. To this narrative, Melancthon promptly published a severe reply ; which again drew from Eck a still more virulent rejoinder. A new and violent enemy to the reformers also started forth in the person of Jerome Emser, a licentiate of theology at Leipsic, whose letter to Zaok of Prague, detailing the particulars of the recent controversy, remains a curious specimen of the scurrilous acerbities which defiled the sentimental differences of the time. An imbittered literary warfare ensued, which soon involved in its vortex many of the most famous names in Europe ; and among the rest, Luther and Erasmus. Whatever may be thought of the immediate result of this memorable conflict, it cannot be doubted that the ultimate effect was eminently unfavourable to the interests of the Papacy. It served to cherish and encourage that awakening spirit of inquiry which, once directed to the abuses of the dominant church, was sure, eventually, to favour the reformers ; an event which not even the succeeding and grave condemnation of the Lutheran opinions by the theological faculty of Paris could avert.

Nor should it be forgotten that from among the auditors many became attached to the principles of Luther, while some, in no long space of time, began both to preach them and to write in their defence.

And it was at this discussion that Prince George of Anhalt, then a youth of only twelve years of age, pursuing his studies under a private tutor, received those impressions which made him, in the course of a few years, one of the most devoted and consistent,



as well as one of the firmest and most enlightened, friends of the Reformation. Melancthon, too, though he took no part in the discussion, was closely observant of its progress. It has been already remarked, that he replied to the publication in which Eck claimed the victory: it deserves to be noted that this was his first work in divinity. Hitherto he had attended chiefly to literature: henceforward he became the able coadjutor of Luther as a theologian.

On the return of Luther to Wittenberg, Miltitz again renewed his importunities, and with increased earnestness endeavoured to promote a speedy reconciliation of the recusant party to the Roman court. The recent collision, however, had not only roused the feelings of Luther and his chief assistants, but, by bringing palpably and prominently under their notice the most odious features of the pontifical creed, had greatly deepened their abhorrence of the system, and stimulated them to an uncompromising and more resolute resistance. Miltitz, who saw all the expected fruits of his skilful diplomacy about to disappear, waxed urgent in his expostulations, and offered larger concessions than he had before proposed. Acknowledging the justice of many of the heaviest charges of corruption which had been laid against the church, he spared no artifice of personal blandishment and sedulous persuasion to entice Luther to agree to some terms of pacification. Unfortunately for his embassy, as happily for the world, the unyielding energy of the reformer's spirit was now fully aroused. He would listen to no further overtures: he peremptorily declined to treat even for a temporary suspension of hostilities; and at once assumed an attitude of irrevocable defiance, by

launching at the pope a memorial, in the form of a letter, which is one of the most extraordinary records of the possible height of human daring that ever astonished the insolence, and braved the uttermost malice, of despotic power. This document has been the theme of inexhaustible vituperation by the Papists; nor have some professing Protestants scrupled to condemn it, as not merely evincing an uncourteous and ungrateful disposition on the part of its author, but as conveying deliberate and gratuitous insult to the regnant pontiff individually. We think otherwise. We can find no indication of a wish to be ironically caustic in those expressions of admiration and respect for the personal accomplishments of Leo X. with which the letter abounds; and as to the vigorous denunciations of the vices of the Papal rule, and the flagitious depravities exhibited by its prominent abettors, we have no sympathy with the puling liberality that would fain have them cancelled. The manifesto (for such, in fact, it may be considered) is doubtless a most pungent and forcible diatribe against the various imposture, hypocrisy, cupidity, and baseness which infested every part of the ecclesiastical regime. Truly did Luther say, that "the Roman Church, once the holiest of all churches, had degenerated into a licentious den of thieves, and had become abandoned to all sensuality, the very kingdom of sin, and death, and hell, the wickedness of which could hardly be conceived even by antichrist himself." But while thus fearlessly describing the rampant iniquity which reigned through every department of the spiritual empire, the writer everywhere addresses the pope himself in terms of compliment and approbation; compares him to Daniel

in the den of lions, and Ezekiel among the scorpions ; reminds him of the infamous practices perpetrated by others under the pretence of his official sanction ; and, disdainig all belief of his actual participation in the crimes of his flatterers and minions, invokes him to descend from his perilous eminence, to banish from his councils those enemies of his reputation who surround him, and repudiate honours which are fit only to be enjoyed by the "Iscariots and sons of perdition." These expressions have been construed into mere taunting sarcasms, poured out in the fiery irritation of a vehement temperament, and studiously adapted to wound the pride and outrage the just feelings of the mitred autocrat of Rome. That such was not their real designation, is evident from the observation that, "besides the pope, there were only four learned and virtuous cardinals" in the whole conclave ; a statement which, as no one surely will affect to torture it into an ironical disparagement of those prelates, is conclusive as to the sincerity of Luther's laudations of their arch-superior.

But it is said that, whatever may have been the appreciation by Luther of the individual character of Leo, to level at him, in the face of the whole world, a missive laden with fierce criminations of the hierarchy over which he presided, was an act of unjustifiable and flagrant insolence. Against this judgment, also, we decidedly protest. Similar proceedings have, before now, occurred in civil revolutions, without exciting the offended wonder of the persons who are forward in condemning Luther. Indeed, we are not aware that any of the great assertors of political freedom have ever been censured for calling on the head of the executive government to remedy those evils in the admin-

istration of a corrupt state of which he was presumed to be neither the originator nor the guardian. The numerous remonstrances delivered, as well by individuals as by public bodies, to Louis XVI. during the inceptive stages of the French Revolution, which, while crowded with professions of attachment to the monarch, demanded the prompt mitigation of particular abuses, and even in some instances the immediate removal from office of certain alleged offenders against the rights of the people, are clearly cases in point; the circumstantial differences being all in Luther's favour. The constitutional theory of our own country distinctly recognises the precise distinction between the sovereign and his ministers, which Luther, with a felicitous pre-conception of a principle so important to the stability and regular operation of an organized polity, assumed to obtain between the pontiff and the depraved creatures of ecclesiastical corruption. It concedes to the popular organ the privilege of approaching the throne, to represent, in appropriate terms, the existence of any specific grievances, be they real or imaginary; and supplicating the dismissal of an administration which is thought to have shown itself either reluctant or unable to amend them. Remembering to what uses this privilege has been applied within the last century, and on what occasions it has been recently suggested to exercise it, we confess that we read with surprise the condemnatory strictures on the conduct of Luther, of some of those writers who have loudly insisted on the adoption of a parallel course under circumstances of infinitely lighter provocation.

But it is not to be forgotten that the proximate influences which wrought upon the mind of Luther, in con-

nection with the publication of this celebrated epistle directly tended to impress him with a conviction of Leo's personal innocence, and disapproval of many of the most shameless indecencies of the inferior priesthood and their servile adherents. The compromise which had so nearly resulted from the negotiations of Miltitz, shows that Luther gave credence to the ambassador's disclaimer for his master of all disposition to authorize, or even to suffer the continuance of, not a few of the abominations which clung to the confessional, and the traffic in indulgences. Now presuming, as he must have presumed, that the nuncio would hardly have exceeded his instructions, and believing Leo to be sincerely bent on carrying into effect his proposed reforms, it seems to us not only that Luther was amply justified in denouncing to the pope those crying and enormous depravities which the recent discussion had more palpably than ever disclosed, but that in separating between that personage individually, and the pestilent system of which he was ostensibly the head, he discovered anything but a desire to give causeless insult, or to expectorate the venom of an irascible and unrelenting nature. That the effect of Luther's address upon the pontiff was at once to excite the only dormant malignity of arbitrary power, and for ever extinguish the last vestige of forbearance, is unquestionably true. But this fact proves only that if Miltitz, in his endeavours to bring about a permanent pacification, had not made much larger overtures than he was authorized to make, Leo X. had, from the beginning, been acting with the proverbial duplicity and Punic faith of the popedom. /The former is, perhaps, the most probable, as well as the most charitable, supposition; but there

is certainly no reason to conclude that Luther so much as suspected that the Papal diplomatist had overstepped his ministerial authority. On the contrary, we may be assured that had such a suspicion ever crossed the imagination of the reformer, he would, much sooner than he did, have cut short the negotiation, and flung off his lingering allegiance to the sceptred tyranny of the Vatican.

Luther concludes the memorable declaration on which we have been commenting with an exhortation to the pope to beware of listening to the seductive flatteries of those, his courtiers and dependants, who, setting him above the voice of general councils, and of the whole church, would persuade him to fancy himself a kind of deity, the lord of the whole world, without whose presence and sanction the Christian religion would itself be worthless. "Those men," says he, "are your foes, and are seeking to destroy your soul: 'the people who thus call thee blessed, deceive themselves.' They are in error who ascribe to you, and to you alone, the exclusive power to interpret the Scriptures; while, under the protection of your assumed authority, they labour to disseminate throughout the church their own blasphemous inventions. Satan, I grieve to say, has accomplished much by such agents under your predecessors." But the most important passage in the whole composition is that which announces the entire hopelessness of any further attempts either to terrify or cajole him into submission; and conveys his immortal avowal of a fundamental principle of the Reformation: "Let no one, most holy father, imagine that I will sing a palinode, unless he wishes to arouse a still greater tempest. I WILL ADMIT OF NO RESTRAINT IN INTERPRETING THE WORD OF GOD."

## CHAPTER VIII.

OPEN war was now declared between Luther and the pontificate. Instigated by the malignant promptings of the offended dignitaries who surrounded him, and especially by the representations of the cardinal of Gaëta, both of whom were severely mentioned in Luther's letter, the pope proceeded to call together a congregation of theologians, prelates, and canonists, to determine what steps should be taken for the suppression of the Saxon heresiarch and his opinions. In thus associating with himself the most eminent churchmen of the day, he was probably influenced as much by a wish to give an air of peculiar solemnity to the subsequent edict, as by any respect which he entertained for the aggregate wisdom of his counsellors, or for the suggestions of the Universities of Louvaine and Cologne, which had recently remonstrated with him upon the danger of permitting the Lutheran errors to remain longer unproscribed. The assembly met at Rome, in the summer of 1520; but, except upon one point, namely, the necessity of immediately discharging upon Luther the anathemas of the church, there was but little show of unanimity among its members. The proper method of promulgating the pontifical denunciation was keenly debated; as were even the minute details of its phraseology and precise form. These important matters being at length, and after much deliberation, satisfactorily adjusted, the thunderbolt which had been forged with so much pomp and labour by

these ecclesiastical Cyclops, was launched against Luther on the 15th of June.

This bull, which may be regarded as having completed the severance of the Lutheran party from the Church of Rome, is one of the most remarkable illustrations that history presents of the insolent self-exaltation and insane security which often precede the final downfall of a declining power. In the magnitude and impious absurdity of its pretensions to universal empire, on the part of the pope, it surpasses even the most exorbitant of its prototypes. Imploring the Almighty to arise and avenge his own cause, it invokes St. Peter and St. Paul, and the innumerable army of the saints, to be urgent in their intercessions for the prosperity and concord of the church. It then goes on to condemn, as scandalous, heretical, and damnable, forty-one propositions taken from Luther's writings; forbidding all persons, upon pain of excommunication, to either preach or listen to them. Next follows a recital of the exemplary forbearance of the holy see; its various and persevering efforts to reclaim the offender; and a vehement tirade against him for his ingratitude and obstinate recusancy. To these statements succeeds a charge of flagrant contumacy, in appealing to a general council in the teeth of the decretals of Pius II. and Julius II., together with an imputation of having slandered the immaculate Papacy. After a few blasphemies about "imitating the omnipotent God, who desireth not the death of a sinner," &c., the pope proceeds to exhort Luther to return, like the penitent prodigal, to the bosom of the church; and calls upon him and his adherents to read a public recantation, and commit their books to the flames, within the space of



sixty days. Failing to comply with this requisition, they are pronounced to be incorrigible and accursed heretics, whom all princes and magistrates are enjoined to apprehend, and send to Rome, or banish from the country in which they shall be found. The towns where they reside are laid under an interdict; and every one who shall oppose the publication and execution of the bull is excommunicated in "the name of the almighty God, and of the holy apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul."

Of about coeval date with this decisive proclamation, was a letter written by Leo to the elector Frederic, having reference to the same subject, the errors, namely, of that "son of iniquity," as he is described, Martin Luther. The Saxon prince received his holiness's communication while he was in attendance at the imperial court. Justly estimating the hollow professions of friendship which it contained, as well as the insidious intimation intended to be given by its affected commendations of his attachment to the church, and horror of the Lutheran tenets, Frederic appears to have resolved henceforth to lend a more overt and determinate protection to Luther than he had hitherto accorded. The University of Wittenberg, seizing the temporary absence of their sovereign as a pretext, refused to publish the pontifical bull; while the appointment of Eck, Luther's intemperate and industrious enemy, officially to promulgate that instrument in Germany, threw an apparent scandal both on the instrument itself, and on the motives by which its authors had been governed in the fabrication and issuing of so extreme and ruinatory a decree.

Meanwhile, the combined influence of the pope and

his confederates was diligently exerted to inveigle the young emperor (who was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, October 23d, 1520,) into making common cause with them against the Wittenberg schismatics. Happily the credit of Frederic "the Wise" was as yet sufficient to countervail the inimical designs of the Papal authority. Ever disposed to insist upon the independence of the Germanic federacy, and consequently to look with a jealous eye upon the encroachments on that independence which were threatened by interventions made under the pretence of enforcing ecclesiastical discipline, that prince had, not improbably, been strengthened in his hostility to the projects of the supreme pontificate by considerations which Melancthon had lately stated with much emphasis in his reply to Eck. This amiable scholar, in his learned exposition of the all-grasping usurpations of the Roman see, had recalled to the memory of his countrymen the historical circumstances connected with the assumed jurisdiction of the pope over the German Church; and demonstrated, that not only was that jurisdiction a thing of mere sufferance and tacit concession, on the part of the imperial states, but that the express letter of the ancient canon law gave the cognizance of all accusations, such as those with which Luther had been visited, to the diet of the empire, in their character of provincial councils. Acting upon this politic suggestion, Frederic employed the weight which his eminent services assured to him among the advisers of the emperor, in bringing the latter to afford the reforming chief an opportunity of making good his defence before the regular tribunal of his country. To this advice Charles was, perhaps, not the less disposed to

lend a favourable ear, that his prophetic sagacity already foresaw the extent of future danger to his own crown which might arise from too large an allowance of ecclesiastical intervention in the domestic affairs of his dominions ; while the instinctive jealousy of successful ambition warned him to brook no assumption by the pontiff of a participant sovereignty within the Germanic territory. At the same time, he was desirous of securing the friendship of the pope to aid him in the now evidently approaching contest with his unsuccessful rival for the imperial crown, Francis I., the French king. On his arrival in Germany, therefore, from his patrimonial dominions, he had appointed a diet of the empire to be held on the 6th of January, 1521, in which the new opinions, as they were termed, which threatened to break the unity of the church, and to disturb the public peace, might be considered, and a proper decision formed.

The electoral prince of Saxony had not delayed to transmit to Rome an epistolary vindication of himself from certain suspicions of an entire adhesion to the Lutheran opinions, which had brought him into bad odour with the conclave. In this justification, which throughout evinces tokens of admirable sagacity, he, with consummate art, introduces those topics which were best adapted to deter the pope from resorting to extreme measures. Not content with simply disclaiming an absolute patronage of the reformers, and denying that he had personally read their publications, he informs Leo that he had the assurances of many learned and pious men that the Lutheran doctrines were sound and godly ; that Luther would, ere this, have quitted Saxony, had not Miltitz represented that under the con-

trol of the elector and the university he was less likely to perform extensive mischief than he would elsewhere be; and that, above all, many of the educated laity having imbibed the sentiments of Luther, and addicted themselves to the study of the Scriptures, any harsh exercise of ecclesiastical power would certainly endanger the public peace, and in all probability be productive of irreparable disaster.

Nor had Luther himself been idle pending these transactions. In the very month (June, 1520,) which saw the publication at Rome of the bull of excommunication, he issued "An Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," exposing the nefarious artifices and prevalent corruption of the Romish Church; a tract which was received with such extraordinary avidity, that in less than eight weeks from the date of its publication, four thousand copies were in circulation throughout the empire. The signal sensation created by this work so greatly exhilarated him, that he wrote to Spalatin to let the elector know, and communicate the intelligence to Rome, that the pope would gain nothing by procuring him to be expelled from Wittenberg, as he should then be in a condition to offer a more obstinate resistance than before, under still higher protection, and in the very heart of the yet untainted Catholicism of Germany. Upon the appearance of Eck, (in October, 1520,) armed with the damnatory bull, the popular enthusiasm began to show itself on Luther's side. The busy malice of the new nuncio was everywhere decried. In some places the copies which he distributed of the pope's decretal were torn from the walls on which they had been posted, and placards threatening him with bodily chastise-

ment substituted in their room. The students of more than one university rose against him; and from some towns the populace compelled him to retire. For a while Luther affected to regard this bull as a mere trick, a spurious invention devised by the malignant ingenuity of Eck, for the purpose of injuring and degrading a victorious antagonist. But satisfied at last of the authenticity of the document, he reiterated his appeal to a general council; which was soon followed up by a series of caustic and unsparing animadversions on the "Execrable Bull of Pope Leo X., Antichrist." In the preface to this production, he accuses Eck of having been the principal instigator of the bull which he was now commissioned to publish; and describes him as a "most noted hypocrite and liar," a "monster," and an incarnation of the very spirit of antichrist. The substance of the commentary which ensues consists of a bitter vituperation of the pollutions and iniquity of the Papal metropolis, which he pronounces to be the seat and chosen strong-hold of Satan. In one part, he even goes the length of acquainting the pope that he has no desire to be absolved from the censures levelled against him; and that he is prepared to maintain his doctrine at the hazard of his life; adding to these announcements a contemptuous threat, that if the pontiff and his slaves continue to molest him, he will not fail to consign them all, in succession, pope, cardinals, bishops, and their atrocious bull, to their father, the devil; only trusting that they may be liberated together at the second coming of the Saviour. "Farewell," he concludes, "farewell, O Rome, thou thrice accursed abomination! Thou art filled with so much of impiety and foolishness, as are unworthy even

to be refuted. By these thy infamous proceedings thou hast openly manifested the base spirit in which thou hast promulgated this detestable decree."

To the appeal was also appended a writing of considerable bulk, entitled, "An Affirmation of all the Articles maintained by Martin Luther, and condemned by the Bull of Leo X.;" which was inscribed to one of his friends, Fabius Felix, a knight of the empire. Among other things which these various publications imbodyed and enforced, was a general protest against the bull, grounded on the four following reasons:— First, that he stood condemned without having been permitted to defend his conduct; secondly, that he was required to deny that faith was essential to the efficacious reception of the sacrament; thirdly, that the pope exalted his own opinions above the word of God; and lastly, that Leo had declined to convoke a council of the church.

His active and inveterate enemy, Eck, having found means, spite of the popular odium which in some districts attached to his movements, to induce the authorities of Louvaine, Cologne, and other towns, both in Germany and Flanders, to assist at the public cremation of the reformer's works, Luther at length retaliated in kind. Having beforehand given general notice of his intention on the 10th of December, 1520, he assembled a large concourse of people, composed of citizens and members of the University of Wittenberg, escorted by whom, he repaired to a spot lying without the walls, where a scaffold had previously been erected, and all preparations made for the ceremony. Here, assisted by the doctors and students of his college, he laid in order a species of funeral pile, which, having lighted with

his own hand, he cast into the fire, by turns, the Abridgment of the Canon Law, the Decrees of Gratian, the Extravagants of Clement VI. and Julius II., and, last of all, the obnoxious bull of the reigning pope, exclaiming, as the blaze took hold upon the pestilential page, "*Because ye have troubled the Holy One of God, thus shall ye be consumed with eternal fire!*" The controversial productions of Eck and Enser shared the same fate; and, looking to the mischievous tendency of the various delusions which the records then destroyed were written to inculcate, it may almost be permitted us to regret that every remaining copy of them in the world has not perished in the same appropriate manner.

The succeeding day witnessed the delivery, in the great church of Wittenberg, of one of those stirring appeals to the sympathies and reason of a vast audience, by which, more than by any, the most elaborate and effective, diatribes from the pen, the heart of multitudes is bowed as the heart of one man to the will of the teacher. After referring to the recent conflagration, he adjured them to renounce, with their whole spirit, the pontifical tyranny, as a thing utterly irreconcilable with the kingdom of Christ, and warring against the safety of their souls. He then selected from the decretals thirty propositions, which he denounced as heretical, and worthy only to be burned; and wound up a discourse which, for fiery eloquence and indelible effect upon the feeling of an immense congregation, has perhaps never been surpassed, by vigorously exhorting those who heard him to abjure all the cunningly-devised fables of a system whose advocates were for ever "speaking lies in hypocrisy;" and to give heed to the

whole word of inspiration, which alone was able to make them wise unto salvation.

Such was the reputation of this sermon, that tidings of it were conveyed to Rome, together with the news of the burning of the pontifical statutes. This last and undisguised contumacy was there regarded as an outrage which placed the offender beyond the pale of reclamation or forgiveness ; and accordingly, upon the 6th of January, 1521, sentence of final excommunication was thundered against Luther. In the second bull, which proclaimed this doom, he was declared a heretic, a son of perdition, and an eternal outcast, expelled the communion of the faithful, and delivered over to Satan. Like its precursor, the new edict was circulated through all the countries of Europe, and variously received in different provinces. In Germany, the general sentiment regarding it was one of unmixed contempt for its arrogant impotence and folly. Nothing, it is probable, could have so clearly indicated the present weakness and approaching decadence of the Roman strength, as did the virtual inefficacy of a commination which, half a century before, might have shaken a monarch from the throne of a hundred ancestors. But the days of darkness were passing away. Printing by moveable types had been invented, and learning had been extensively revived. And while, as was then customary, strong language was used by Luther to express vehement feeling, yet this was only mixed up with arguments numerous and weighty, which carried conviction on every hand, and led multitudes to exclaim, " With this man is found the truth of the gospel : his cause, therefore, is the cause of God."



## CHAPTER IX.

AN eventful period, not only for Luther, nor even for the church of Christ, but also for the whole human race, was now approaching. The first diet of the empire under the new reign had been appointed, and one of the principal subjects of consideration was to be the conduct of Luther. According to the provisions of the Golden Bull, Nuremberg should have been the place of assembly; but the plague having appeared there, the members were required to meet at Worms. Frederic repaired thither in company with the emperor, who had earnestly requested him to bring along with him the Wittenberg professor; but the elector, wishing to delay the appearance of Luther till various preliminaries had been adjusted, declined to comply. The diet assembled in January, according to the appointment of Charles when he first landed from Spain, and at once proceeded to the discussion of the important matters on which their decision was required.

Having deputed Caraccioli, an apostolic notary, who, a few years later, was elevated to the rank of cardinal, to bear to the emperor the customary congratulations of the popedom on his accession, Leo considered the Lutheran revolt to be of sufficient importance to demand the nomination of a second representative, specially delegated to superintend the extermination of the Wittenberg heresies. This duty, a duty as hopeless as it was invidious, he devolved upon Girolamo Alexander, a distinguished ecclesiastic, than whom a man of finer faculties, of bolder spirit, and more entire devo-

tion to the interests of the Papacy, could hardly have been found among the ranks of its ablest and ambitious servants. Presenting himself at the coronation of Charles, the theological legate, as was his style, followed in the imperial train, from Aix-la-Chapelle to Cologne, where he caused the books of Luther to be burnt, though not without some demonstrations of popular hostility. Thence he repaired to the ancient city, which was honoured by the assemblage of the federal potentates of the empire. The opportunities which his attendance on the emperor threw open to him, he did not fail to turn to skilful account, by bespeaking the promised aid of his own views of many of the electoral sovereigns; while, on the side of Luther, the princes of Bavaria and Saxony stood alone and unsupported. One of the ostensible purposes for which the diet had expressly been convoked, was the condition of the Germanic Church. Upon this subject Aleander brought to bear all his eminent talents, in a speech of three hours' duration, and of such singular power as to have won the admiration even of those most adverse to the policy which he recommended. "In the course of his oration," says the biographer of Leo X., "he asserted that the opposition of Luther was not confined to the pope and the Roman see, but was directed against the most sacred dogmas of the Christian faith; that Luther had denied the power of the supreme pontiff, and even of a general council, to decide in matters of doctrine,—without which, it was evident that there would be as many opinions on the sense of Scripture, as there were readers; that by impugning the doctrine of a free agency, and preaching up that of a certain uncontrollable necessity, a door was opened for all

kinds of wickedness and licentiousness, as it would be thought a sufficient excuse to allege that such crimes were inevitable. After discussing these and many similar topics, he concluded by observing that the Roman court had laboured during four years, without effect, to subdue this detestable heresy; and that nothing now remained but to entreat the interference of the emperor and the German princes, who might, by an imperial edict, expose both it and its author to merited execration and contempt."

It will be seen that in this harangue, Aleander artfully took advantage of Luther's apparent acquiescence in the positions maintained by Carlostadt, to inflame against him the prejudices of the diet. It was his policy to lead the assembly, at once, and before the excitement produced by his eloquent declamation had subsided, to place the reformer under the ban of the empire, and thus to extinguish a rebellion which, gathering strength daily, the Papal bull was impotent to suppress. The prudent and calm sagacity of the elector Frederic, however, defeated the hopes of the legate. Professing to give no opinion on the intrinsic propriety of Luther's sentiments and conduct, he insisted that there would be scandalous injustice in proceeding either to condemn those sentiments, or coerce their reputed author, without first calling him before them, and legally interrogating him as to the alleged fact of his having taught the offensive dogmas that were said to be contained in his books. To Aleander, the universal approbation with which the assembled princes received this proposition was a sore disappointment; for he was too well aware of the probable effect of the personal presence and eloquent intrepidity of

Luther, to regard with indifference a project which threatened to supersede the predisposition of the diet in favour of his own schemes. The proposal, however, emanated from too high a quarter, and was, besides, too reasonable in itself, to be rejected. It was therefore resolved that Luther should be forthwith summoned to attend, and answer for himself, under protection of a safe-conduct from the emperor. When the mandate requiring him to bring himself before the diet reached Wittenberg, it occasioned not a little alarm to the reforming party. Many of them, in terror for their leader's safety, entreated him to disregard the citation; reminding him of the fate of Huss, who, betrayed by similar pretences, had forfeited his life by a too rash confidence in the good faith of his persecutors, at the Council of Constance. Himself not ignorant of the peril he was about to encounter, it would have inferred small dishonour to his habitual fortitude if he had hesitated to obey the command of a body of whom the majority were well known to be inveterately opposed to both his cause and person. But to all the persuasions of his friends Luther was deaf. "I am called," said he; "it is ordered and decreed that I appear in that city. I will neither recant nor flee. I will go to Worms, in spite of all the gates of hell, and the prince of the power of the air."

Without delay, he prepared to accompany the imperial herald who had been sent to escort him to the scene of his trial and his triumph. Not a few of the most conspicuous members of his own university attended him; and such was the general veneration which his character and fearless assertion of the principles of religious freedom had awakened, that the

whole journey resembled an ovation. In every town through which he passed, multitudes thronged to catch a glimpse of the man who had so bravely lifted his voice against the oppressions and depravity of the armed see of Rome : and had mere ambition or human vanity mingled with the higher impulses that guided, and the feelings that sustained his heart, those passions might have been even surfeited with the applause which hung upon his progress.

The Papal emissaries meanwhile were exerting their utmost influence to procure the immediate condemnation of Luther ; or, failing in this, to prevent his appearance before the princes of the empire. Devoted as they were to the Papacy, they knew how much the church stood in need of reform, and how heavily its numerous abuses pressed upon all ranks, so that even those who were most opposed to doctrinal alterations, earnestly desired amendments utterly at variance with the interests of the Roman court, and were ready to embrace the first opportunity of securing them. Nor were they ignorant of the power of Luther's eloquence, or of the weight and force of his arguments. They had no wish to grapple with him in debate, nor to gain any more such victories as that of which Eck boasted at Leipsic. Their efforts, therefore, were unremitting to win the young emperor to their schemes ; and the friends of Luther were so much alarmed, that they wrote to him, even after he had left Wittenberg, beseeching him to return. He received the letter at Oppenheim, whither he had arrived in his way to Worms. His answer lives in the memory of every Protestant Christian in the world : " In the name of the Lord, I will be there ; I will enter into the very

mouth of Behemoth, and there acknowledge Christ. INTO THAT PLACE WILL I GO, THOUGH THERE BE IN IT AS MANY DEVILS AS THERE ARE TILES UPON THE HOUSES ” On his entry into Worms, (April 16th, 1521,) Luther was again surrounded by a multitude of spectators, eager to testify their admiration of his singular resoluteness and constancy. As he approached the hall where the diet held its sittings, on the ensuing morning, various expressions of approving sympathy, coupled with exhortations to acquit himself with his usual courage, were addressed to him by the crowd. “ Monk,” said Frundberg, an old captain in the imperial army, laying his hand on the reformer’s shoulder, “ beware what you do : you are in more danger than any of us have ever braved upon the field of battle : but if you are in the right road, go forward in God’s name, and be sure that he will not forsake you ! ”

Arraigned before this august senate of the empire, with its ascending orders of principalities and powers, the calm magnanimity of the man never abandoned him for a moment. His dignified bearing, and the serene self-possession which a sense of the grandeur of his cause assured to him, commanded the respect of even his bitterest enemies ; and it deserves to be commemorated, that his treatment upon this, the greatest and most critical occasion of his life, when the curse of excommunication already branded him, was expressive of far more deference and respect than that which he had experienced in his former interviews with Cajetan at Augsburg. Upon a table, in the centre of the room of audience, lay copies of those works of Luther which the recent bull assumed to convict of heresy. In front of him sat, as canonical assessors, the two legates,

Aleander and Caraccioli; while above them was the young emperor, in whose bold ambition the hopes and fears of nations had already read auguries of his future renown, surrounded by the ecclesiastical nobility and feudal barons of the Germanic states. A more imposing tribunal never, perhaps, clothed itself with the judicial function, or proceeded, under legal form, to perpetrate upon an individual, strong only in his own integrity, an act of injustice that was surpassed by nothing but the folly and national degradation which it involved.

The duty of interrogating Luther, as to the charges preferred against him, fell to the lot of the imperial orator, Eyk, who was also vicar-general of the archbishop of Treves. The similitude of names, which, indeed, under the Latin form, Eccius, are identical, has led some writers carelessly to confound this official with the early and persevering adversary of the Reformation, Eck, of scurrilous memory. By direction of the emperor, Luther was asked, first, whether he acknowledged the books which had been so widely circulated throughout Germany under his name; and, secondly, whether he would now retract or disavow their contents. In these inquiries, the real point at issue was assumed; namely, that the tenets avowed by Luther were heretical, and worthy to be punished. Before he could reply, Schurff, one of his Wittenberg associates, demanded the names of the works in question; and their titles being enumerated by the orator, Luther answered, that of the volumes then before the diet, some were merely designed to inculcate the Christian faith and morals, which he was allowed, even by his accusers, to have done in a Scriptural and profitable

manner. To retract those portions of his writings, would, he stated, be equivalent to a denial of principles upon which all parties agreed, and which were, indeed, essential to the order and welfare of society. In others of his productions he had waged war against the abuses of the Papacy, and those spurious doctrines by means of which the priesthood had, for centuries, impoverished the people, fettered their reason, depraved their moral sense, and assisted to destroy their souls. To recall the sentiments to which he had given expression on these matters would only tend to aggravate the burden which was already insupportable, and lend his aid to perpetuate a tyranny which was as odious to himself as it was grinding and destructive to the poor. The remainder of his publications, having been chiefly composed in the heat of controversy with writers who had attempted to vindicate the pollutions of the Romish Church, and to suppress the true faith of Christianity, might, he admitted, have been characterized by a too vehement and acrimonious spirit. At the same time, he contended that even such of his tracts as belonged to the latter class he was not bound to cancel; inasmuch, as by so doing he might be thought to afford, at least, a tacit approbation of practices which were abhorrent to all Scripture and religion. "I am, indeed," he continued, "only a man; I pretend to no infallibility; nor can I better defend the opinions which I hold than in the words of my divine Saviour, who, when he was interrogated of his doctrine by the high priest, and smitten by a slave, said, 'If I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil.' If the Lord himself, he who could not err, did not hesitate to invite the testimony against his word of even



a rude menial, how much more ought I, who am but dust and ashes, and who may easily fall into error, to be willing to hear what any man can advance against the doctrine I have taught. By the mercy of God, therefore, I adjure your imperial majesty, and the illustrious princes here present, to bid any person, who is able, be he of high or of low degree, to examine me as to my belief; and show, if it be possible, by the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles, that I have been deceived. Convince me from Scripture that I have erred, and, not content with merely retracting my errors, I will be the first to cast the books which contain them into the flames."

This characteristic address was delivered in a low and humble tone, without any vehemence or violence, but with gentleness and mildness, and in a manner unequivocally expressive of the respect due to those before whom he stood, on account of their rank and station. He was no passionate enthusiast. His feelings were strong; but he held them in perfect control. When, for the interests of truth, he saw that it was the time to speak forth the deep and mighty indignation of his soul against those corruptions which, *if he were right*, hindered the access of the sinner to his Saviour, obscured the glory of the most high God, and were the occasion of the spiritual slaughter of multitudes, he did so upon principle. And if sometimes he exceeded the limits which controversialists are now expected to observe, be it remembered that he was only a man, and that a larger license was allowed than at present: let it likewise be remembered that, *if he were right*, no language is sufficient to express the mischief which the Papacy occasioned, nor

the atrocity of those crimes of which its determined abettors were guilty. If he rightly understood the Scripture, instead of saving souls from death, their life was spent in destroying them.

On the present occasion, however, his address was calm, though earnest; and, though full of caution, yet sincere, manly, and respectful. When he had finished speaking, he was told by Eyk that he had only travelled from the question, to which he was expected to give an unequivocal and direct reply. It was then that the mighty heart of the reformer, filled with a feeling of the profound responsibilities of his situation, and supported, surely, by a more than human energy, conceived an answer which, for pregnant solemnity and calm heroism, is, beyond all other words in modern history, sublime. "Since, then," he said, "your imperial majesty, and your highnesses, now assembled, require a plain, simple, and brief answer, I will render one, without reservation or evasion. Unless I shall be convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by other and manifest reasons, (for upon the authority of popes and councils alone I cannot rely, since it is clear that they have often erred, and even contradicted one another,) I neither can nor will revoke anything that I have written, seeing that to act against conscience is neither safe nor honest. HERE I STAND: I CAN DO NO OTHER: GOD HELP ME! AMEN."

Great and brave man! If ever was illustrated the admonition and the promise of our Saviour to his disciples, that when they should stand accused before magistrates and powers for his sake, it should be given them in the same hour what they should speak, it was in the case of Luther, at the Diet of Worms. Upon his

words hung not alone the intellectual and religious liberties of Europe, but, indeed, humanly speaking, we may add, the circulation of the gospel in the world, and the eternal happiness of millions, who, but for the unflinching intrepidity of Luther, might never have had access to the records of divine truth. He himself, when referring to this event not long before his death, seems to have been astonished at his own firmness. "It is thus," he remarked, "that God gives us strength for the occasion: but I doubt whether I should now be equal to such a task."

Some private conferences with the archbishop of Treves, and others of the more liberal members of the diet, ensued, in which various efforts were made to shake the constancy of Luther, and induce him to rescind some, at least, of his obnoxious declarations; and when, at length, the prelate, finding him inexorable, demanded what remedy he would propose for the dissensions which had so long divided and embittered the public mind of Germany, he responded in the words of Gamaliel, upon a very similar occasion, "If this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." Persons were not wanting to incite the emperor to violate the pledge of security under which Luther had been drawn to Worms; but the more independent members of the diet instantly took the alarm. "The death of John Huss," exclaimed the elector palatine, "has brought too many calamities on Germany for us to think of again erecting a like scaffold." Even Duke George of Saxony, firmly as he adhered to the ancient system, exclaimed, "The German princes will not endure the violation of a safe-conduct. Such perfidy befits

not the ancient good faith of the Germans.”\* Even the subtle and ambitious Charles, cold as he was in reference to genuine Christian virtue, uniting the phlegm of the Spaniard and Fleming with the cunning and dissimulation of the Italian, saw that it would not do to stain the commencement of his rule by an outrage of such perfidious atrocity ; and, perhaps apprehensive of the consequences, he contented himself with ordering the reformer to quit the city, which he did on the 26th of April.

\* It was reserved for more modern times, for the O’Learys of Popery to deny that the safe-conduct was violated : a denial involving as direct a breach of truth, as the violation itself was of all Christian honour and integrity.

## CHAPTER X.

THE description given of Luther in the penal edict of Worms is characteristic of the malignant ingenuity of his Papist foes. By way of justifying the severe denunciations which ensue, he is there represented, not only as a rebel against the pontifical tiara, and a contumacious heretic, but as a wretch who, himself leading, instructed others also to lead a sensual and licentious life; who openly despised all laws, whether of divine or human origin; and was, in short, little better than the incarnate spirit of evil, arrayed in the habiliments of an Austinian friar. On account of these and kindred enormities, sentence of outlawry, within the imperial dominions, is decreed to take effect upon him after twenty-one days from the date of his departure from the diet. All persons who might thereafter be guilty of reading, printing, or distributing any of his writings, or who, in any manner whatsoever, should countenance, harbour, or abet him, were to incur the same penalty which attached to himself; while every subject of the emperor was charged to aid in capturing or destroying him.

This act of secular excommunication was, however destined to be fully as innocuous as had been the ecclesiastical proscription which it proposed to carry into execution. The herald who, by direction of the emperor, escorted Luther on his way homeward as far as Friedberg, had scarcely quitted him, when (on the 3d of May, 1521,) his party was suddenly surrounded by a number of armed horsemen, wearing masks, who

seized and hurried him away, through the forest of Thuringia, to the old castle of Wartburg, a fortress situated among the mountains, not far from Eisenach, which had formerly been a residence of the landgraves of the district. Whether this seizure was made in accordance with a scheme which had been previously concerted between the reformer and his watchful prince and patron, the elector, is unknown ; but as it was clearly the object of Frederic to keep himself out of sight in the transaction, and by leaving the friends of Luther in ignorance of his precise destination, to deprive his enemies of all possible clew to it, we are not much inclined to believe that Luther was privy to the design. Be that as it may, the circumstance is at least illustrative of the provident care of the electoral sovereign for the life and interests of his illustrious subject.

During his seclusion in the mountain fortress of Wartburg, Luther was neither idle nor forgetful of the infant cause to which he had dedicated all the energies of his active and virtuous mind. From that retreat, which he called "Patmos," "the Desert," and other names indicative of solitude and exile, issued his "Tract on Auricular Confession," one of the most valuable of his minor works ; which was followed by a "Letter to the Students of Erfurt," on respect to the clergy ; and several other treatises, written with his accustomed vigour. But of all the labours which engaged him in this season of retirement, the most memorable is his masterly exposure of the sinfulness and folly of monastic vows ; a discourse which well deserves to be known, as an antidote to the unnatural pretexts upon which the whole system of conventual

life is founded. The interest with which these performances were received by the German nation was, no doubt, vividly enhanced by the curious sympathy which their author's disappearance had excited. But notwithstanding his exemplary diligence during the nine months of his sojourn at Wartburg, the monotony of his pursuits conspired, with a fear of injury occurring to the new-born Reformation at Wittenberg, to render him impatient of the friendly restraint that was laid upon him.

Meantime, the Augustinians of that city, reassured by the appearance of these tracts, and the letters which from time to time found their way to Melancthon and the chief members of their body, took the first step toward effecting a general change in the ceremonial of public worship, by allowing the communicants to partake of both elements in the sacrament, (the Roman ritual withholding the cup from the laity,) and abolishing the private celebration of masses. To the latter of these reforms, which disposed of one of the most lucrative and disgraceful sources of revenue to the Roman clergy, succeeded an abandonment of the usage of begging for the order; and, finally, a formal recognition of the guilt and worthlessness of conventual vows, and the enforced celibacy of priests.

While the fruits of his former exertions were thus disclosing themselves at Wittenberg, and while other places in Germany were preparing to imitate the example of that town, a new and remarkable antagonist had started against Luther, in the character of a respondent to the dissertation on the "Babylonish Captivity of the Church." Henry VIII. of England, who, in early life, had cultivated an acquaintance with the

scholastic divinity, and especially with the solemn perplexities of Thomas Aquinas, scandalized at the irreverent dealing of Luther with his favourite theologian, resolved to inflict due chastisement on the Saxon heresiarch, and with that view composed his Treatise on the Seven Sacraments. This composition, which has long been forgotten, was not without the merit of a certain dialectical ingenuity, mixed with much native shrewdness, and considerable learning. As the offspring of a kingly pen, it was hailed at Rome with rapturous applause, and rewarded by the pope in full consistory, conferring upon the royal author the title of "Defender of the Faith;" a title which subsequent events converted into a monument of the short-sightedness of the infallible popedom, and which, since the days of Elizabeth, has been borne with better right by his successors on the British throne. But while the sacred college thus recorded its admiration of the royal disputant, Luther replied to him with the most contemptuous acerbity. He treated the king, indeed, with far less show of forbearance and civility than any other of his numerous opposers. The tone of his rejoinder is so singularly and unnecessarily severe, as to have sometimes drawn upon him considerable censure. If, however, we consider that he might naturally look upon Henry VIII. as a gratuitous intruder on the province of polemical speculation, and further, that he had probably anticipated for his tenets a more auspicious reception in England, the bold asperity of his strictures on the ponderous trifle of his crowned assailant will be seen to furnish little matter of surprise.

The months which Luther spent in his "Patmos" were very eventful ones. Leo wished to avail himself



of the rivalry between Charles and Francis, so as to expel the French from Italy; hoping, at the same time, that the power of the emperor would be so reduced in the contest, that he, too, would be confined to his ultramontane provinces. Charles, likewise, had been successful in attaching Cardinal Wolsey to his interests, and thus of securing the friendship of Henry VIII. Wolsey aspired to the Papacy, and the reserved, artful, ambitious, and unprincipled emperor had bribed him, by leading him to expect, on the next vacancy, that the whole influence of Germany and Spain, in the conclave, should be exerted in his behalf.

For a time the plans of Leo were successful. The imperial forces in Italy defeated those of France, battle after battle. And as at the same time Spain was agitated by civil commotions of the most serious character, the attention of Charles was diverted from the religious affairs of Germany, while that of Leo was chiefly directed to his political schemes in favour of Italy. The principles of the Reformation, therefore, were spreading, germinating, and bearing fruit, almost without notice; certainly without those checks which, under less favourable circumstances, they would have experienced. This was indeed the hand of God; and these providential opportunities were prolonged by the death of Leo, early in December, 1521, and by the intrigues which followed, and which resulted in the election of Adrian of Utrecht to the Papal throne. The new pontiff had been the tutor of Charles, and was now his regent in Spain. Some time elapsed, therefore, before his election could be notified to him; and even then, a considerable period elapsed before he entered Rome, and engaged per-

sonally in the direction of ecclesiastical and public affairs.

Luther, meanwhile, although in retirement, was not, as we have seen, idle. It was while at Wartburg that he prepared his first sketch of a translation of the New Testament, and the five books of Moses. But from this undertaking he was for a short time diverted by circumstances which suddenly recalled him from the obscurity of his mountain retreat. Not unobservant of the changes which, during his absence, had been brought about in Wittenberg, he appears to have been apprehensive of the zeal of his followers outrunning their discretion; and hence had arisen various misgivings which, for some few months before he finally resolved to return, and take the direction of affairs into his own hands, had not a little disturbed his peace. But when at length intelligence reached him of the appointment to the university, in which he still retained his official rank, of a professor of the canon law, (that law which was the very implement and mainstay of the Roman predominance,) he felt that no amount of personal risk ought any longer to detain him in his voluntary captivity. To the great delight, therefore, of his partisans, early in March, 1522, after a concealment of ten months, he returned to Wittenberg, where, notwithstanding the satisfaction which he must have realized in finding how firmly his doctrines had become rooted in the public mind, his presence was by no means undesirable or needless. It would seem that Carlostadt and others, in their eagerness to abolish all remnant of the ancient superstition, had proceeded to extremities which Luther was far from deeming either necessary or expedient. Among

other things, hasty reformers had swept the churches of the pictures and images which had long adorned them and which Luther (while none of his disciples more loudly than himself condemned the sin of offering to those effigies idolatrous honours) would have retained for the present as suitable emblems and monumental tokens of the capital events in sacred history. The shrines of saints, and everything else which ostensibly tended to perpetuate the actual worship either of the idol, or its archetype, he was resolutely bent on removing; but he held, nevertheless, that the visible representation of passages in the life of the Saviour and apostles was capable of being turned to good account, as a mode of impressing on the popular feelings and imagination many of the cardinal and most interesting facts connected with the mysterious story of man's redemption. But another and more serious point of difference between the reformer and his injudicious ally, Carlostadt, was the indiscriminate administration, by the latter, of the eucharist to all who desired to participate of that sacrament. Adhering to his original and emphatic opinion, of the necessity of faith to the beneficial reception of the sacred elements, Luther considered also that there was something akin to profanation in admitting persons to communicate without solemn preparation, and an assurance of their individual worthiness and aptitude to profit by the ordinance. But, apart from this wise and wholesome caution, he was at variance with his former colleague and supporter on the anxious question of the real presence. The literal existence in the bread and wine, of the body and blood of Christ, Carlostadt utterly repudiated; while Luther, on the other hand, rejecting the Popish notion of the

absolute transformation of the material signs into the veritable substance of the divine person whose mediatorial death they were designed to commemorate, still held that substance to be actually attendant on, and in some unintelligible manner blended with, the consecrated symbols. This singular and unreasonable conception of the quality and import of the sacrament of the Lord's supper was one of the few vestiges of an outworn and abandoned creed which haunted the masculine sense of the chief reformer. It was, in fact, only a mitigated, and not less delusive form of the Romanist error; and it must be confessed that had the idea of consubstantiation been far better authenticated than it could be shown to be, and of vastly graver moment as an article of faith, no consideration could have fully justified the ungenerous and harsh, not to say oppressive, means which Luther made use of to repress the supposed heterodoxy of Carlostadt. It is not indeed literally true, as sometimes has been alleged, that, unsatisfied with displacing that rash innovator from his pastoral charge, Luther procured his ejection from the university. On the contrary, it was at his own will that Carlostadt resigned his offices of professor and archdeacon, and withdrew from Wittenberg; but not until those places had been rendered intolerable, by a series of annoyances which, to say the least of them, bordered on contumely and persecution. It is with unaffected regret that we record a passage so little in concord with the general height and dignity of Luther's character. But without seeking to palliate what admits of no vindication, we are bound to state that the final motive of a conduct so unworthy of the liberator of his country and his race must be sought

for in that sensitive and vigilant jealousy of the grand solemnities of religion, which, seeing in Carlostadt a tendency to divest a principal and hallowed rite of its appropriate sanctity, and to bring it down to the level of a mere ceremonial usage, was but too liable to be pushed into austerity and excess. If we duly weigh the delicate and critical posture of the young church of the Reformation, and bear in mind the imminent peril of doing too much,—of removing things worthy of holiest and perpetual preservation along with the abuses that have gathered over and enshrouded them,—which is incident to every transition from a state of general prava-tion to one of renovated purity and health, we may be taught to judge tenderly of the influences which, in a situation of exquisite difficulty and some danger, betrayed a noble heart into the rare commission of ostensible injustice.

On his return to Wittenberg, Luther had judged it proper to write to the elector an account of the reasons which had drawn him forth from his place of safety and concealment. His letter is a fine specimen of the native courage which distinguished him, ennobled and invigorated by a reverent confidence in the providential protection of a Being higher than the kings of this world. In it he expresses his conviction that in coming again among his people, he was following the indications of that divine will which he ever sought to make the rule and guide of his motions. In his absence, he observes, that Satan had been busy with his flock, and alludes particularly to his grand project of a translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular tongue; in executing which, he states himself to be in want of the assistance of his learned and pious

brethren. With the aid chiefly of Melancthon, that gigantic and beneficent enterprise was, by dint of exemplary and indefatigable industry, completed within the space of a few succeeding months ; and the year 1523 is illustrious in the annals of Christendom for the publication of the first entire version of the Old and New Testaments, in a living language, that was ever given to any of the countries of continental Europe.

The general character of the Lutheran Bible is well known, and the work has always been held in high esteem for its faithful transcription of the meaning and spirit of the original. With extreme simplicity and idiomatic plainness of expression, it reflects the precise and often profound significance of the sacred canon with a rare and admirable felicity ; and, on the whole, it may, perhaps, be justly thought to have fallen short of the excellence of no similar work extant, except our own incomparable translation of the same hallowed pages. The version of the Psalms, especially, belongs to the highest order of meritorious translations. It evinces such an intimate familiarity with the involved power and subtle implications which characterize the phrase of those inspired poems ; such an apt appreciation of the pregnant and suggestive *intimations* which belong to the style of the Hebrew lyrics ; and such a deep, sympathetic intelligence of their informing purpose, and the labouring conception of their writers, ever oppressed and almost overwhelmed by the intrinsic majesty of the thoughts that arose within them, as could have been experienced only by minds endowed with a more than common measure of innate poetry, and enriched by a wise and devout culture of those sensibilities which minister to the vir-

tual efficacy and manifest loveliness of genuine, practical religion. This portion of the work, which, in truth, is pervaded not more visibly by evidences of various and sound learning, than by tokens of a self-diffident humility and earnest regard for the spiritual information and welfare of its readers, might, from its internal indications, have been ascribed almost entirely to Melancthon, (with whose understood qualities of heart it is in beautiful accordance,) had we not distinct testimony that, in a larger degree than were any other parts of the whole performance, it was the unassisted product of Luther's own meditations and ability. The exquisite facility and gracefulness with which the solemn imagery of the royal singer of Israel is transfused into the German idiom are not a little remarkable when we remember that the hymns and other original poetry of Luther are uniformly disfigured by the faults of ruggedness, inelegance, and the substitution of rude strength for harmonious sweetness. The English reader may form some apprehension of the merit and precise nature of the value of Luther's version of the Psalms, when he is told that in point of beauty, sustained dignity, and energetic brevity of language, commensurate to the deeper force of the Hebrew model, it bears a very discoverable affinity to the fine translation of Isaiah by Bishop Lowth.

Of the remaining books of the Old Testament, though the sense of the original Scripture is everywhere transferred with scrupulous fidelity, the Wittenberg version betrays comparatively little of that extraordinary opulence of expression, and uplifting of the translator's spirit to the full height of his "great argument," which the transcript of the Psalms developes. It is

however, as we have said, marked throughout by singular and cautious accuracy, and general adherence to the best-authenticated copies of the prophetic writings. Its gravest blemishes, which, after all, are but of small account, consist in an occasional preference, without sufficient cause shown, to the text of the Septuagint, and sometimes of the Latin Vulgate ; faults which may well be pardoned to men who were, in truth, the very pioneers of modern Hebrew scholarship, and the renovators of all the illustrative and collateral branches of Biblical literature. The place which their Bible has maintained for upward of three centuries in the estimation of Protestant Europe constitutes the surest voucher for its fidelity and excellence ; while it is open to no dispute that many passages of the original Scripture are in that translation given with an adequacy and striking manifestation of the real import of Hebraic obscurities, which has seldom been transcended.



## CHAPTER XI.

THE death of Leo X., which occurred, as we have seen, at the close of 1521, had been followed by the very unexpected elevation to the pontificate of Adrian, cardinal of Utrecht; a man whose learning and religion were such as the cloister could produce. Cordially satisfied of the validity of the Papal empery, and resolute to uphold it in its integrity and splendour, the new pope was, nevertheless, aware that under its shadow there had grown up a mass of clerical abuses and corruptions which, reflecting scandal on the Roman creed, had weakened, and in many cases alienated, the affections of all classes of the Christian community, and had thus prepared the way for the more willing reception of doctrines such as those preached by Luther. In order, therefore, to cure the evils, the existence of which he acknowledged, he projected certain administrative reforms, adapted to restrain the indecent cupidity and profligate licenses that disgraced the body of the priesthood. At the same time he proposed to disallow that indiscriminate prostitution of indulgences which, under his immediate predecessors, had universally prevailed. Had Leo, in the primal vigour of his faculties, and with the full influence of his eminent fame, addressed himself to such a task, not only is it certain that he might to a great extent have succeeded in curbing for a time the ostentatious impiety which brought the church into general odium; but it is also probable that by a vigorous enforcement of stringent discipline, and an unequivocal excision

of the dispensatory prerogative, he would indefinitely have postponed the Reformation. But Adrian, though sincere, and even earnest in his desire to remedy abuses, to remove corruptions, and to promote the general amendment of the church, soon discovered that it was more easy to promise than to perform. Too many of his own court were interested in the continuance of the evils which he acknowledged and deplored, for him to obtain their concurrence in the reforms which he intended, but was thus unable to effect. He, as far as he understood it, looked at religion, and wished to promote its interests. They thought of nothing less. What to the people were abuses, were to them sources of wealth; and it was not in the power of the aged pontiff to infuse his own spirit into the ambitious, luxurious, avaricious, and, in only too many instances, skeptical cardinals and prelates by whom he was surrounded, and without whose cordial co-operation he himself was utterly powerless. It is one of the most remarkable circumstances of that remarkable period, that the only pope who appeared to be sincerely religious (however mistaken, on the principles of Luther, his religious views might be) was for that very reason despised and opposed. Rome did not want a Christian pope; and when Adrian talked of endeavouring to restore the ancient discipline, the cardinals listened with contemptuous astonishment, pursued their own course, and compelled the unhappy head of the Christian world to regret his elevation to a throne which his honesty rendered him unfit to fill. The only effects of his acknowledgment of clerical abuses were, on the one hand, to strengthen the cause of Lutheran reform, by furnishing the reformers with admissions of the

truth and justice of their often-repeated charges ; and, on the other, to complete the alienation of his selfish and dishonest, but astucious, counsellors. One of the subjects mooted in the preparatory consultations of the pontificate was the old sin of indulgences. Deciding to publish a bull, declarative of the real sentiments of the see in relation particularly to those monstrous profanities, the pope was warmly advised by Cajetan to explain them to be nothing more than dispensations from penances imposed by ecclesiastical authority. But this advice, the most prudent that could have been given, was overruled partly by the stolid sincerity of Adrian's private belief in their larger validity, and still more effectually by the anticipative fears of the clerical courtiers, who, in the abrogation of the Clementine doctrine respecting the plenary efficacy of the Papal pardons, beheld an omen of the approaching downfall of their power, in its very citadel and centre. The universal pravation of manners which, having rioted for ages in the strong-hold of the Papacy, had been fostered into a broader and shameless licentiousness, under the luxurious prodigality of the late pontiff, had, in truth, so utterly outrooted every vestige of *moral* restraint from the entire population of Italy, that to have cut away, or even to have limited, the pretended power of absolution, would have been equivalent to a severance of the church's last hold on the seared conscience and effete sensibilities of the multitude. Stimulated by long tolerance, and the example of a thousand of the princely impostors who scarcely veiled the immoralities that defiled their ecclesiastical rank under a semblance of outward decorum, the public profligacy had waxed flagrant and obscene. Vice had put on a

bolder front, and walked, stark and blushless, in the sunshine. Pardon or no pardon, tax or no tax, by the church, crime was a thing too dominant and general to be held in check by the legitimate terrors of religion. It had gained a mastery so wide, an ascendance over the habitual hopes, thoughts, and projects of all classes, so binding and impulsive, that it was sure, at all events, to revel unrestricted and regardless, whether the privilege to sin with impunity should continue to be sold or not. At the same moment, there still lingered in the general and enslaved condition of the popular feeling enough of hereditary deference for the claims of the popedom, mingled with some faint relics of that superstitious foreboding of future pain which is never absent from a state of ignorant, but not unconscious, impurity of life, to beget a custom of submitting to be mulcted in the price of a supposititious exemption from penal liability and danger. The people would have remained vicious as they were, spite of the abolition of these precious immunities; for the whole frame and being of Italian society was steeped to the very lips in various and inveterate pollution; while the excision of so lucrative an article of commerce would have prodigiously impaired the revenues of the Catholic primate; and, shutting up all hope of any appreciable advantage to be derived from a form of obedience to the church, would also have imperilled the loss of Italy, by mere force of indifference and skepticism, as Germany had been already lost by a renovation of the pure truth of Christianity.

Such being the ominous doubts which overhung the meditations of the sacred college, Adrian at length be-thought him of addressing the emperor, recalling to his

memory the disastrous prevalence of heresy among his subjects, and prompting him to put in force the vigorous edict of Worms. Too much occupied with the double business of allaying a formidable insurrection which had recently arisen in his native kingdom, and attempting to forestall the threatened mischances of a war that as yet showed few signs of soon taking a decisive turn in his favour, to give personal heed to the exhortations of the pope, Charles was, nevertheless, well-disposed to sanction what means soever, for the suppression of the growing Reformation, his brother, and temporary viceroy, the archduke Ferdinand, should think proper to employ. The latter prince, although not untainted with the acerb bigotry which has so commonly and unamiably marked the royal house of Spain, was probably careless of the rise of the Lutheran party, except so far as it might indirectly affect the political views of his imperial relation. Pending the instant aspect of the war with Francis I., it was of material importance to propitiate a continuance of that friendly disposition on the part of the holy see which Leo had, just before his death, decidedly exhibited toward Charles V.; and while the numerous obligations conferred on Adrian by his former sovereign ensured a general leaning of that pontiff to the interests of the emperor, the position of affairs in Europe was by far too critical to allow of any trifling with the wishes of a man whose office bestowed on him the power, if once displeased, to work irreparable mischief to his benefactor.

But if considerations of this kind may be supposed to have whetted the vague and unintelligent animosity of the archduke, as of his brother, to the Lutheran

cause, there were circumstances in the domestic state of the empire which made an attempt to enforce the decree of the Diet of Worms too dangerous a measure to be rashly adventured on. Galled and outwearied by the numerous exactions and severe oppression heaped upon them by their feudal masters, the peasantry of Suabia, Wirtemberg, Flanders, and other districts, had for some years manifested occasional symptoms of that spirit of furious resistance which was only to be quenched eventually in savage and sanguinary battle. Similar demonstrations were now menaced, especially in Suabia and Thuringia, where the popular discontents were not a little fomented by the frantic declamations, and pretensions to prophetic inspiration, of a certain fanatical preacher, of the name of Thomas Munzer. This person, who was originally a Thuringian curate, had been one of the earliest and most enthusiastic followers of Luther; and, more lately, a strenuous promoter of the ill-timed intemperances of Carlostadt. One of the main inducements to the reformer to quit the secure privacy of Wartburg, had been the wild professions by this man and some kindred lunatics at Wittenberg, of being specially inspired by the Holy Ghost. Melancthon, indeed, with an excess of self-diffidence which is not often combined with so many noble ingredients as were mingled in his nature, and which was perhaps his characteristic defect, had hesitated to take upon himself the risk of pronouncing these pretensions to be spurious and delusive; alleging that only Luther himself was competent to determine how far they were entitled to credit. For this inaction and timidity in such a case he was severely reproached by his more energetic leader, who, mind-

ful of the apostolic injunction, to "try the spirits," lost no time in rebuking the hallucinations of a perverse and weak imagination. Of that rebuke, (which, however, does not appear to have been couched in terms of peculiar harshness,) Munzer would seem to have retained, through the rest of his life, an embittered and vindictive remembrance; as the various pamphlets which emanated from his pen during the next two or three years were crowded with passages of insane scurrility and venomous detraction from the just reputation of his quondam guide and chieftain.

These events, coupled with the somewhat inauspicious complexion of public affairs throughout all Europe, had the effect of teaching the imperial vice-regent the necessity of being extremely cautious how he proceeded to counteract the increasing prevalence of the Lutheran faith. All things considered, Ferdinand concluded that the most prudent course would be, by the authority and with the approbation of the emperor, to convoke another meeting of the diet; which consequently assembled at Nuremberg, in November, 1522.

By this time the New Testament had been translated into the German language, and was read by all classes with avidity. Several free cities likewise, as Nuremberg, Frankfort, and Hamburg, having embraced the opinions of Luther, had abolished the mass; and the elector of Bradenberg, the prince of Anhalt, and the dukes of Brunswick and Lunenberg, had become the avowed patrons of the reformer, and countenanced the preaching of evangelical doctrines to their subjects.

When the diet assembled in November, (1522,) at Nuremberg, the Papal nuncio, Cheregato, admitted, on behalf of Adrian, the existence of numerous corruptions

in the church, and promised their amendment. He then demanded, on behalf of the pope, that the rescript of Worms should be put in execution forthwith, and rigorously. But the diet, in reply, referred to the increase of the followers of Luther, and to the prevailing discontent at the exactions of Rome. They requested that a general council might be held in one of the free cities of the empire ; and presented a list of a hundred grievances, of which they required redress. The Recess of the Diet, published in March, 1523, enjoined all to wait with patience for a general council, and admonished preachers to abstain from mere matters of controversy, and to confine themselves to the plain and instructive truths of religion.

In the mean time, the disputes between the emperor and the French king left the former little leisure to attend to the religious affairs of Germany: Luther, therefore, and his friends, continued actively engaged in investigating, publishing, and defending the truth. To the admissions of Adrian, and to the official list of grievances presented by the diet of the empire, they appealed in proof of the correctness of their own assertions and complaints.

The diet had called for a general council. Whether this requisition would have been successful, even had Adrian continued to sway the ecclesiastical sceptre, is very doubtful. But even though a free, wise, honest, and dispassionate assembly might have promoted the religious pacification of Germany, there would have been great, if not insurmountable, difficulty in constituting such a tribunal from the ecclesiastics of the period. The period, too, had gone by for conciliating the reformers, and reclaiming them to the church of



Rome. The dispute had become one of fundamental principle. Even had Adrian conceded some administrative reforms, the system that remained would have been altogether at variance with that which was now held by Luther. But the trial was not made. In the latter part of the year, the honest but mistaken pontiff departed this life ; and the estimation in which he was held at Rome will easily be gathered from the circumstance that during the night which succeeded his decease the populace adorned the house of his chief physician with garlands, and placed on its front the significant inscription, TO THE DELIVERER OF HIS COUNTRY.

## CHAPTER XII.

ONE of the disappointed candidates for the pontifical dignity, on the decease of Leo X., it has been already stated, had been our own celebrated and ambitious countryman, Wolsey. The grand competition had, indeed, been predicted to lie between him and the cardinal de Medici, when the over-anxiety of either party in the conclave, to defeat the hopes of its rival, issued in the election of Adrian.

Charles, during his visit to England, in the year 1520-1, foreseeing the importance of establishing an alliance with Henry VIII., as a subsidiary means of harassing the movements of the French king, appears to have won to his purpose the full influence of the cardinal of York, by promising to support his pretensions to the ecclesiastical purple, in the event of Leo's demise. That Charles ever intended to fulfil this promise is exceedingly doubtful: that he never actually attempted to promote the elevation of the aspiring Englishman is certain. Probably he feared to assist in raising to a position so formidable as was then the Roman primacy, a man whose genius and diplomatic subtlety were not exceeded by the egregious arrogance which provoked his ultimate degradation.

The close of Adrian's short tenure of the pontificate threw open another opportunity of contesting the sceptre of the church; and the unhappy Wolsey was again tempted to seek possession of the more than regal authority attached to it. Had he, upon this second occasion, been cordially supported by the emperor, it is

not unlikely that the British prelate might have realized the consummation of those superb anticipations which, failing him in this instance, were doomed to be still more emphatically frustrated before his death. Deceived by Charles V., as by more than one of the rest of his expected friends, Wolsey had the mortification to witness the success of his former antagonist, who, as a near, though illegitimate relation of Leo X., and possessing a character very different from the honest simplicity of Adrian, was peculiarly acceptable to the Italian people. To the English cardinal, indeed, the promotion of Adrian proved doubly unfortunate, inasmuch as it not only precluded him during the life-time of that pontiff from the eminent station which he coveted, but, by exasperating the popular aversion of the provinces adjacent to the seat of the Papal government to an ultramontane ruler, provided the majority of the conclave with a plausible excuse for refusing him their suffrage. The bastard son of Julian de Medici accordingly succeeded without difficulty to the vacant throne of St. Peter's. The hale constitution and comparative youth of Clement were such as to leave but small chance of any future opening to the sacred chair for a personage who, but for his exorbitant vanity and lust of domination, might, at least, have had a place, through all ages, in the foremost rank of British patriots and statesmen.

Than between Clement VII., on the one side, with his keen faculties, his hereditary boldness, and Machiavellian policy, and the senile imbecility, upon the other, of the pope whom he succeeded, a broader contrast can hardly be imagined. What the latter had regarded as matters of exigent and cordial desideration, for their

own sake,—the purgation of the church, and prompt removal of all the more flagrant causes of complaint against the practical working of her corrupt economy,—Clement would never have troubled himself withal, had not the actual posture of things in Germany, and elsewhere, imperatively called for speedy and ostensible, if not real, effectual, and permanent, alteration. But once aroused to serious deliberation and remedial effort, the blood of an illustrious ancestry flowed too warmly, though in an illegitimate current, through his veins, to suffer him to forfeit, by procrastination, the advantages of time, or the force of his own high name and public repute, by infirmity of purpose or ambiguous operation. That something must be done, and that as swiftly as prudently, to prop the fractured and tottering fabric of ecclesiastical domination, was palpably evident to the acute perceptions of the now regnant pontiff. Nor is it easy for us, with our just and deep horror of the system that acknowledged Clement for its arch-minister and organ, fairly to estimate the practical sagacity, the nice calculation of the varying power of human motives, the shrewd talent of accommodation to existing urgencies, and, above all, the wondrous perfection in the art of giving feasible semblance to an illusory and hollow affectation of probity, which characterized the projects of ecclesiastical reform avowed by this worthy scion of the wiliest family in Europe. If we may suffer our imagination to clothe that creature of fraud and falsehood—of crouching superstition in its subjects, and tyrannical aggression on the side of its administrative officers—with an ideal personality; or to conceive of Clement VII. as a sort of incarnation, for the time being, of its proper spirit and propensions,

under the action of a particular species of extraneous impulses ; the popedom will be seen to have resembled, at the period in question, some individual and hoary hypocrite, who having, by a long series of ingenious deceptions and covert treachery, raised himself to the unjust possession of enormous affluence and power, begins to feel that the elaborate contrivances of years of perfidy and guilt are crumbling about his ears. In such cases, when they occur (as only too often they *do* occur) in private life, it is amazing how vast an amount of genius, of rich and multiform ability, is not uncommonly expended in the desperate endeavour to reunite the broken threads in the complex tissue of villany, to stave off detection, and prevent the impending ruin. In this respect, especially, the parallel holds good : for although it would consist neither with charity, nor absolute fairness, to impute to Clement, pre-eminently and apart from his advisers, a clear and adequate consciousness of the pravity of the Roman see, or a mere interested desire to perpetuate the imposture and the wrong which he thoroughly comprehended, and knew to be indefensible ; it is but true, strictly and lamentably true, that having drunk so deeply of the demoralizing influences of a corrupt polity, as to have indefinitely dulled and darkened his moral sense, he had, besides, and not unwillingly, so identified his reason and his very nature with the intimate and base quality of the church he ruled, as to present an image of that church, in its crowned pomp and purple-clothed grandeur, grappling corruption to its bosom, and wrestling to preserve every fragment of error that was not utterly rent away and scattered to the winds, as with the frantic affection of a bereaved mother.

When Clement ascended the pontifical throne, Germany was agitated by other discontents and conflicts than those which arose from theological controversies. Society was passing into a new condition and form; and states of social transition are seldom states of quietness. The ancient feudal system existed in many of its forms, but its overthrow was certain; and the rather so, as its decrepitude was oppressively tyrannical. Throughout Europe, the peasantry, as well as the inhabitants of cities, were demanding relief from the burdens occasioned by the remaining customs of feudalism; and, in many instances, claiming to have an acknowledged political existence. In Germany great discontents existed among the peasants, who appear to have been, in too many instances, oppressed beyond human endurance. They were, practically, serfs, attached to the soil, and regarded only as the medium through which the baronial proprietors had to procure the wealth which they expected their estates to furnish, and which was generally expended far from those from whose incessant toil it had been wrung. Nobles and clergy, with but few exceptions, seem to have been engaged in this work of oppression. Instead of feudal service from the vassal, gifts and contributions were in perpetual demand; and the cultivators of the ground felt themselves condemned to the deepest poverty, and to wearing and hopeless toil.

From these circumstances sprang what is termed "the war of the peasants," and which the enemies of Protestantism and Luther have not been backward in ascribing to his own revolt from the ancient authority of the church. Unfortunately for this charge, the insurrection broke out in parts of Germany to which the

opinions of Luther had not extended ; and during the year 1524 was chiefly confined to the Suabian territories. The origin of the movement—which at its outbreak, and during its progress, was marked by a ferocity evidently excited by long-suppressed hatred, and which sought to revenge the wrongs which had, as was alleged, driven them to rebellion—was entirely political. Had Luther never preached, these disturbances would still have burst forth. In fact, they do not seem at first to have engaged his attention. Subjects with which himself was more immediately concerned occupied his thoughts, and filled up all his time.

In the spring of 1524 the ancient city of Nuremberg was honoured by a second session, held within its walls, of the Imperial Diet. At this meeting, Campeggio, an Italian cardinal and favourite of the pope, attended as legate, to bespeak, once more, the strenuous co-operation of the princes in extirpating the Lutheran faith. Personally known, and not unacceptable, to most of the members of the diet, this nuncio, by dint of argument, persuasion, and the subtle application of those interested incentives which the servants of the Church of Rome have never wanted either skill or aptitude to use, prevailed upon the assembly to pass a new decree condemnatory of the tenets and proceedings of the reformers, accompanied by a resolution that the rescript of 1521 should be vigorously put in force. But while thus ostensibly yielding to the wishes of the popedom, as intimated by the cardinal-legate, the German princes were, by no means, hearty or united in devotion to the church. On the contrary, those among them who were not deficient in political shrewdness, cherished a secret willingness to sacrifice

the interests of the hierarchy as a means of ultimately enriching themselves, and, in the mean time, of disarming the popular dissatisfaction, which had now reached a height premonitory of an immediate outburst of civil war. Balancing these considerations against the probable consequences of a cordial concurrence in the proposals of the Papal envoy, the more crafty spirits of the diet continued to clog their seeming compliance with a counter demand that the pope, with the consent of the emperor, should, as early as possible, convene a general council, to be holden in some part of Germany, to consider of the best method of promptly and effectually redressing certain grievances which notoriously attached to the operation of the ecclesiastical system. It was further determined that, in the following November, the diet should again assemble at Spire, to concert measures for the conservation of the public tranquillity, and definitively to settle the precise reforms to be required from the expected council. Notwithstanding a message from the emperor, whom the continuance of the war with Francis still kept at a distance from the seat of their deliberations, the federal legislators, careless of their sovereign's expressed disapprobation of the decisions of their former meeting at Nuremberg, and equally inattentive to his protest that he would not sanction the agitation of church questions elsewhere than in a formal council, determined to avail themselves of so favourable an opportunity publicly to apprise the pontificate of the reformations they were prepared to insist on. That with these promptings of mere policy, there mingled a conviction that the re-enactment of the anti-Lutheran edict was virtually nugatory, it is impossible



to doubt, when we recollect that, during the sitting of the diet, no less a number than four thousand persons were known to have partaken of the eucharist in both kinds ; thus openly repudiating the authority and doctrine of the Papacy, in the very presence of the pontiff's representative, and his secular allies.

Campeggio, understanding the real character of the decision to which the diet had come, withdrew, on its conclusion, in April, to Ratisbon ; where he was speedily joined by those of the dietary nobles who continued steadfast in their adherence to the church. The Papal nuncio there laid the foundations of the first league that was formed in Germany for the avowed purpose of upholding a particular form of faith and ecclesiastical discipline. At the suggestion of the cardinal, several of the Germanic dukes and other potentates entered into a confederacy with a number of the prelates of the empire, binding themselves to maintain, by every available means, the creed and ceremonial of the Roman Church. This compact is the more worthy to be noticed, inasmuch as it constituted the pattern and exemplar of those future unions which eventually consolidated and assured the religious liberties of the Protestant states.

Luther himself was pursuing his course actively and diligently at Wittenberg ; endeavouring, in conjunction with him who may indeed be called *his friend*, Melancthon, to imbue the minds of the university students with truth, to spread the same truth by their pulpit discourses, and to promote its influence and extension by their epistolary correspondence. In the year 1519 he had published his "Commentary" on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. This, having again exam-

ined it, and made what alterations he saw fitting, he re-published in the beginning of the present year. Its title, in his collected works,\* is, "In Epistolam Pauli ad Galatas D. Mart. Lutheri Commentarius, pro uersæ Scripturæ methodo perutilis. Anno XXIII, ab Autore denuo recognitus." And in a marginal note, by the editor of the collection, he says, "Anno 1519, D. M. L. primum Commentarium in Epistolam ad Galatas edidit: anno autem 24 recognovit." To this particular epistle, indeed, he appears to have been strongly attached. The reasons are obvious. The grand subject of the epistle, justification by faith, was the pole-star of all his observations; and the earnestness with which St. Paul reprovèd the Galatians, as well as the very strong terms in which he denounced the preachers of another gospel, would suit well with the warmth of his own feelings, and the emphasis of the language which he employed to express them. He was, in fact, somewhat in danger of dwelling so much on this epistle, as not to make even the necessary distinctions in the application of the term "law." His strong sense at once seized upon *the principle* on which the apostle's argumentation rested. He saw that in no sense could the law justify the man who had broken it. To unsinning man it would have given direction during the continuance of probation, and at its close, in case of unswerving obedience, declared the promised recompense to be due. But to the sinner it could only minister wrath. Justification was not within the range of its instrumentality. And, for the most part, in some of the strongest (and even strangest) expressions which Luther permitted himself to indulge

\* Tom. II. (Ed. 1582, Jena.)

on subjects connected with grace and debt, the law and faith, he was careful to show that he only spoke of the law as attempted to be made the means of a sinner's justification. Still, he sometimes employed expressions which, however he might himself understand them, were not only misunderstood by his enemies, who eagerly embraced every opportunity of censure, but also by some of the more unstable of his own disciples, to whose Antinomian opinions they appeared to give support. Some of his expressions would appear to be inconsistent with the adoption and enforcement of the divine law by Him to whom "all power is given in heaven and earth;" and, fancying that he saw contradiction (where in reality none exists) between the Epistles of Paul and James, he at one time inclined to reconcile them by making the latter give way; a method of reconciliation only differing in application from theirs who require the former to yield. The wonder is, that a man in Luther's circumstances should have avoided error so thoroughly as was really the case. On no subjects are clearness of thought, and guarded distinctness of expression, more necessary than on those which had so recently been brought before the mind of the reformer, and which he had not only to preach for the edification of individuals, but to defend against errors all but universally prevalent. He had to preach practical truth controversially. He had to show that pardon was to be apprehended and received only by the faith of a penitent heart, fixing directly on the *gift of God*, and the atonement and intercession of Christ. He had to show that no works might come in the place of faith; nay, that when employed as substitutes for faith, they might become posi-

tively injurious. Thus to preach faith without even seeming to make void the law was no easy task for a man who received the truth in its calorific as well as its luminous rays, and who sometimes sought to awaken attention by presenting the truth itself in the form of startling paradox. But He who raised him up, enabled him to stand, and guided him in the right way. He was careful to point out the real nature of "good works," Scripturally considered, and to enforce a steady and constant reference to the divine commands. He was anxious, likewise, to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour, the only Mediator; and to show that conscience could have no peace except by "faith in his blood." And if to this subject he appeared at any time to attach comparatively greater importance than to some others, let the period in which he lived, and the methods by which men were taught to seek for reconciliation with God and mental tranquillity, be remembered and understood, and the wisdom which guided him will be undeniably apparent.

Subsequently to the republication which has suggested these observations, he preached a course of sermons on the Epistle to the Galatians, which, being taken down by different hearers, and collected together, were afterward published, and form that "Commentary on Galatians" which is usually known in England. The opening and close of the preface to this may be given, as strikingly descriptive of the man:—"I myself can scarcely believe that I was so plentiful in words when I did publicly expound this epistle, as this book showeth me to have been. Notwithstanding, I perceive all the cogitations which I find in this treatise,

by so great diligence of the brethren gathered together, to be mine. *For in my heart this one article reigneth, even the faith of Christ; from whom, by whom, and unto whom, all my divine studies, day and night, have recourse, to and fro, continually.*" And having alluded to the opposition of Papists and those who were then called Anabaptists, he thus exhorts the minister of Christ, and encourages him to fidelity: "And herewithal let him comfort himself that there is no peace between Christ and Belial, or between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Yea, let him rejoice in the troubles which he suffereth by these sects and seditious spirits, continually springing up one after another. For this is our rejoicing, even the testimony of our conscience, that we be found standing and fighting in the behalf of the seed of the woman against the seed of the serpent. *Let him bite us by the heel, and spare not. We again will not cease to crush his head by the grace and help of Christ, the principal bruiser thereof, who is blessed for ever.*"

One or two of his "annotations" may be given, as illustrating the spirit in which he wrote.

Upon the words, "*Who gave himself for our sins,*" (chap. i, ver. 4,) he thus comments: "The apostle says, *who gave*, that is, a gratuitous gift to the undeserving; not, he dispensed a reward to the worthy. So in Romans v, 'We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.'

"Then again, he gave—what? not gold, nor silver, not men; no, not even the whole host of angels; but that than which there is nothing, than which he had nothing, greater; he gave himself! Himself for our sins; a gift so inestimable for what was so despicable

and odious. O the condescension and love of God ! which with very excellent words are here so aptly set forth to us, illustrating the delightful mercy of God our Father. Where are now the proud boasters of free will ? where the erudition of moral philosophy ? where the virtue of laws, whether divine or human ? Such were our sins, that by such a price alone could they be taken away ; and all that we do by will, by laws, by doctrines, to render ourselves righteous, will only produce a false show of virtue, and incurable hypocrisy. Our sins will remain uncovered ; and what can virtue profit, if sin be unpardoned ?

“ Nor is the pronoun *our* to be contemptuously overlooked. It will profit thee nothing to believe, generally, that Christ died for the sins of others, while thou doubtst whether he died for thine. Even devils and wicked men can believe that Christ died for sins. But with a constant faith thou must trust in him for thyself, reckoning that thou art one of those for whose sins he was delivered. This is the faith which shall justify thee, and cause Christ to live, dwell, and reign in thee.”

Referring to the expression in the fourteenth verse of the same chapter, “ *traditions of my fathers,*” he says, “ Wherefore, unless the doctrine of faith, which purifies the heart, and which justifies, be clearly made known, all the learning of all our teachers is but as *the traditions of our fathers.* The precept, indeed, shows us what things are to be done ; but when these are found to be impossible, then the doctrine of faith, the gospel, teaches us to flee to the grace of God, and to implore God himself, our Master and Teacher, that he would, by the finger of his Spirit, inscribe in our

hearts his own letters, living, luminous, and burning ;\* that thus illumined and enkindled, we may cry, Abba, Father. And this is not human tradition, but divine learning.”

On St. Paul's rebuke of the insincerity of St. Peter, referred to in the second chapter of the epistle, after speaking of the different views that had been taken of the subject, he breaks out in one of his bold and characteristic exclamations : “ But I do not like all this excusing and praising. It is better that Peter and Paul should be confessed to have fallen into unbelief, yea, to have come under the very anathema of which Paul has been speaking, than that a single jot of the gospel should perish.”

The paradoxical and hazardous way in which he sometimes allowed himself to speak has been mentioned. A brief instance occurs in the note on ver. 17, chap. ii, “ Christ is not a legislator, but a fulfiller of the law. Every legislator is a *minister of sin*, because he gives occasion of sin by the law. Whence the old law was not given by God himself, but by the ministry of angels ; but the new, that is, grace, he gave by himself, sending his Holy Spirit from heaven.”

But such bold assertions arose not from want of judgment. Seldom has the principle of the difference between the Old and New Testament dispensations, and at the same time their agreement, been more happily expressed than by four words in his notes on the twentieth Psalm, published during the preceding year. After saying, “ Another sacrifice, but the same faith and the same spirit in all ages, places, works, and per-

\* *Suas literas, vivas, et lucentes, et ardentis ; quibus illuminati et accensi, clamemus, Abba, Pater.*

sons ;” he adds, “ *Externa variant ; interna manent,*” “The external expression of principle may vary, but the internal principle remains the same.” The pious Christian, in the devotional perusal of the Psalms of David, enjoys the fellowship of saints.

It was in communicating information on subjects of the greatest moment that Luther was occupied, while the two political rivals, Charles and Francis, were cherishing their schemes of ambition, and striving for the mastery. The pope, too, desirous of establishing his own temporal power more fully in Italy, so conducted himself as that the imperial court, though loud in professing allegiance to the sovereign pontiff, seemed glad of occurrences which disturbed his attention, weakened his influence, and threatened to reduce his sway to such matters as were purely spiritual. Thus did the opponents of truth, by their mutual disputes, growing out of their inordinate ambition, hinder themselves from meeting the rising and advancing Reformation with an opposition which, had it been united, humanly speaking, could scarcely have failed of being successful.

Toward the close of the year, Erasmus, who had contributed in various ways to prepare at least the *learned mind* of the age for the preaching of Luther, became his opponent ; publishing his *Treatise on Free-will*. Of its publication he thus speaks in a letter to the bishop of London, Cuthbert Tonstall : “The die is cast. My pamphlet on Free-will is gone forth ; very moderately written, but which, unless I am much deceived, will excite great disturbance.” That he regarded the step as placing him in a new relation to the reformers, seems plain from his use of the poetical



proverb, "Jacta est alea," not only to his Episcopal correspondent, but in a letter written the same day to Henry VIII. : "The die is cast. My pamphlet on Free-will is given to the world. A bold exploit, as matters are now in Germany. I expect stoning almost. Outrageous replies will be flying about my head. But I console myself in the example of your majesty, who, in their irrational violence, was not at all spared." The philosopher was mistaken, so far as the immediate publication of angry replies was anticipated by him. Luther's "Treatise" on the subject was not given to the public till the latter end of the following year.

## CHAPTER XIII.

LUTHER'S greatest trouble, in this part of his career, came not from his ancient enemies. The insurrectionary spirit had now extended to those parts of Germany in which the great principles of the Reformation had been preached. To convince the public generally of the errors of the ancient system, the word of God was read, arguments were founded upon it, and the Scriptural exhortation was repeated, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good." But it was not to be expected that, while the good seed was sown, the enemy would bring no tares. They who heard the reformers, heard of the right of private judgment; and by many it would be perverted into the right to think as they pleased. In all ages there are those who are prepared for enthusiasm by ignorance and self-conceit; and for fanaticism by self-conceit and violent passion. In the age in which the Reformation broke out, though the means of instruction were multiplied, yet the mass of the people were awakened in a state of gross and most melancholy darkness. And these were men possessing all the faults of human nature, and liable to all the errors and perversions which, by whatever outward circumstances excited and modified, have their source and support in the deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart. A self-conceited, half-enlightened man, hearing of the impossibility of salvation by the law; of the efficacy of faith in Christ; of the vanity of mere human learning, untaught of God; of the power of the teaching of the Holy Ghost; of the equal brotherhood

of all Christian believers, considered as such ; and of the true rights of conscience, as founded on personal responsibility to God ; would soon be able, with these elements, distorted and corrupted, to construct a system, half enthusiasm, half imposture, and utterly removed from the holy religion of which its professors, nevertheless, so loudly boasted. Even in 1522 Luther had held two or three conferences with some men of this class, who had begun to occasion very serious disturbances ; and he felt this the more, that his enemies, as was to be expected, represented these errors as the natural consequences of what they chose to describe as innovations in religion. The persons who were introduced to Luther spoke of their visions and inspirations ; but he, after listening attentively to what they had to say, told them that their views were utterly unsupported by Scripture. This, however, did not at all convince them that they were wrong ; and they left him, pitying his ignorance, and elated with their own fancied triumph.

When the "war of the rustics" had extended itself to the countries where the Reformation had been preached, the mischief of these true enthusiasts began to assume a more serious character. Political injuries, real or supposed ; the desire of obtaining political privileges ; in a word, the various passions excited among those who yield themselves to insurrectionary impulses, became connected with feelings supposed to be derived from heaven itself. Violence thus was consecrated by religion ; and men who violated the commands of God in their lives, and whose entire spirit was in opposition to the divine will, said, in effect, like Jehu of old time, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord." But such are

men when self-will is elevated to an idol, and human passion attributed to divine inspiration.

The truly fanatical preachers, Storck and Stubner, under the direction of the notorious Munzer, had already leagued themselves with the exasperated mobs which an overwrought oppression had at last stung into rebellion. After inciting the populace of Zwickau, in Misnia, where he had fixed his home, to the perpetration of some disgraceful outrages, such as robbing the churches of their internal decorations, and forcibly expelling from the altar priests engaged in celebrating public worship, Munzer had caused himself to be elected to the presidency of a kind of civil council, in which he assumed to regulate the domestic affairs of the town by special inspiration from heaven. It is curious, in the history of fanaticism, to observe how insensibly the meanest and most sordid impulses of a selfish vanity will sometimes mingle with the visionary excitements of a shattered understanding. Reckless as he was, and in the main, we have no doubt, sincere, that is, believing himself to be right, this desperate dreamer had no sooner tasted the brief luxury of power, than he commenced to decry the right of all earthly magistrates to wield authority over himself and his deluded followers. In this mischievous phantasy, his own crazy judgment probably placed some vague reliance; for he who had previously fancied himself to be endowed with the gift of prophecy was not likely to startle at the less impious suggestion, by the insane spirit that tormented him, of a privilege to be superior to all worldly control. Hallucinations of nearly the same order are far from being rare among all classes of enthusiasts, as well political as religious. By more

than one learned speculator on the springs of human action, they have, not very charitably, been considered to infer some primal and deliberate dishonesty in the minds which they pervade and overthrow. But the truest solution is, that they are akin to the half-conscious knavery in which many an utter madman finds a chuckling and strange delight. Without enough of rational and distinct perception clearly to discriminate the quality of the impelling motive, there yet hangs about the intellectual wreck a sort of shadowy reminiscence of departed impressions, which serves only to intensify the pleasure of the illusion, by mixing with it something of the sweetness of "stolen waters."

From its very complexion, this species of crazy self-deceit and elevation is eminently contagious. Apart from the sheer *self-esteem* which it both engenders and feeds, it finds an apt predisposition and a potent ally in the bosoms of an unhappy multitude of human creatures. In looking over the records of superstitious insanity, it is observable that the huge mass of persons who, in conformity with the lessons of some original propagator of the frenzy, have dreamed themselves into a conceit of their own personal visitation by preternatural and uplifting revelations from heaven, have had their lot in the lowest and most destitute grades of society. Their condition, generally, in this life has been one of abject wretchedness. They were the people to whom the very lees of human misery had been a portion; and that among such a people there should always be awake an inordinate craving not only for excitement, as the handmaid of forgetfulness, where memory is bitterness and sorrow, but also for some warm, some earth-renouncing consolation, peculiar to

themselves, and exceeding the common consolations of our race, in a proportion commensurate with the ostensible excess, beyond the ordinary pangs of men, of their own burden of suffering and humiliation. That such a morbid appetence should exist, and bare the avenues of the mind to the access of an exalting and oblivious fanaticism, can hardly stir the wonder of any one who has had much experience of the pains, and scorns, and struggles of the poor. Not, therefore, to the doctrines taught by Luther are the lamentable excesses of this fanaticism to be ascribed. They will be misunderstood by none who know the native corruption of the human heart, and its strength of hallucinating passion. And when they recollect the political circumstances in which Luther found German society, and the ignorance, and consequent exposure to error, by which the whole mass was pervaded, the whole subject will appear to be less one of astonishment than of lamentation. The actual state of society being perceived, transition to another and better condition might have been expected to be accompanied, as indeed it was, by the movements of a fanaticism which, though utterly to be condemned, prove that men are at length awakened from their sleep, and will soon live, if proper guidance be afforded them, as those who are alive from the dead, and awake to righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Nor may the consideration of this subject, to which attention has so frequently been directed, as presented by some of the most remarkable circumstances connected with the early years of the Reformation, be dismissed without a passing reference to the conduct of the clergy of that very church whose members have

pointed to this fanatical Antinomianism, and, representing it as the proper effect of the preaching of Luther, have constructed an argument for the purpose of proving him to have been in the wrong. A moment's reflection on the form of their argument might have shown them that, if it were conclusive at all, it pressed with equal force on the predicted consequences of the preaching of Jesus Christ himself. Familiarity with the book which records his discourses would have brought to their recollection the memorable words, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law." There were evil passions in the breast which even the preaching of Christ might be the occasion of kindling into a flame as unnatural as it was devastating: but was that preaching either erroneous or unseasonable?

The impiety and venality of Rome at the time in which Luther began to preach were unquestionable. Adrian, "in his instructions to the nuncio Chierogato," had avowed "fully and distinctly the evils that had crept into the church. 'We know,' said he, 'that for a long time many abominations have existed near the holy see; abuses of spiritual things; excess in the exercise of authority; everything has been turned into evil. From the head the corruption has spread into the members, from the pope to the prelates; we have all gone astray, there is none of us that have done good, no, not one.'"\*

But what was he to do? He promised, indeed, to

\* Ranke, vol. i, p. 94.

eradicate abuses, and sought to redeem the pledges he had given. The performance, however, he found to be beyond his power. "Abuse strikes too deep a root; it has grown with the growth, it lives with the life of the body to which it clings." "If he wished to suppress the revenues hitherto enjoyed by the curia, in which he detected an appearance of simony, he could not do so without violating the fairly-acquired rights of those whose offices depended on these revenues; offices which they had generally purchased. If he meditated a change in the dispensations of marriage, and a repeal of certain existing prohibitions, he was met by representations that church discipline would thereby be injured and enfeebled. In order to check the monstrous abuse of indulgences, he was very desirous of introducing the old penances; but the penitentiaria remarked to him that *he would thus incur the danger of losing Italy, while striving to secure Germany.*"\*

The consequences were inevitable. "In such a state of things, genuine Christian-mindedness and faith were out of the question; there arose, indeed, a direct opposition to them. While the common people sunk into an almost pagan superstition, and looked for salvation to mere ceremonial practices, the opinions of the upper classes were of an anti-religious tendency. How astonished was the youthful Luther when he visited Italy! At the very moment that the offering of the mass was finished, the priests uttered words of blasphemy which denied its efficacy. It was the tone of good society in Rome to question the evidences of Christianity. 'No one passed,' says P. Ant. Bandino,

\* Ranke, vol. i, p. 96.



‘for an accomplished man, who did not entertain heretical notions about Christianity: at the court the ordinances of the Catholic Church, and passages of holy writ, were spoken of only in a jesting manner; the mysteries of the faith were despised.’”\*

That which is purchased for profit will always be made to produce all the gain that can be derived from it; and thus venality in the church inevitably led to oppression. The higher orders in the church (like the nobility, who sought revenue in the room of the decaying services of feudalism) sought to obtain from those whom they regarded as their vassals the largest possible quantity of wealth; and their example was only too extensively followed by the inferior clergy. The “hundred grievances” presented by the German diet furnished a specimen of the rapacity of which the whole empire complained; and which, when evil passion was once aroused, pointed to the objects of dislike, and furnished an excuse for violence. Let man be studied, and the voice of history, and how deeply soever we may deplore the crimes committed by the rustics and fanatics of Germany, they will excite no astonishment.

The commotions thus more particularly excited by Munzer were not brought to a close till the beginning of the summer of 1525. This unhappy man, of low extraction, but combining much cunning with the semi-information that he had received during the course of his education for the priesthood, aided by others less able, perhaps, but not less frantic than himself, took advantage of the movements which had already been stirred up, and contrived to recommend a theological

\* Ranke, vol. i, pp. 72, 74.

system which he had put together to the irritated multitude, and to make the insurrection in some respects a war of religion.

While this incendiary was gathering around him the banded hordes of a desperate population, Luther, indignant at the busy malignity of Duke George of Saxony and his advisers, who were earnest in their endeavours to procure an active execution of the edict of Worms, sent forth perhaps that boldest of all his publications, "A Treatise on the Secular Power." In bitterness and pungency of invective it would be hard to exceed this tract. Alluding to a severe mandate, which the emperor had been recently persuaded to issue against him, he invites every good Christian to join him in praying for the conversion of the imperial princes, who, he says, must have been sent among the people as a scourge from God. Charles V. he calls "a poor and miserable creature;" and describes the general body of the Germanic nobles as "maxime fatui, pessimi nebulones super terram."\* In stern and fearless tones, he warns the federal oppressors, from the supreme monarch downward, that by hurling such denunciations at the restorers of the gospel, they were invoking the divine anger on themselves; that nothing could more surely tend to arouse popular resistance; and that, even then, while the Turk menaced the frontiers of the empire, the horrors of civil war were suspended over their heads. The strong and contemptuous language of the discourse on the secular authority, together with its monitory predictions of the coming revolt, have been construed by some of the reformer's Papist ca-

\* "For the most part insane, and the basest scoundrels on the earth."

lumniators into an evidence of collusion with the insurgent fanatics, or connivance at their meditated outrages. A charge more utterly at variance with notorious truth was never framed; for at the same moment when Luther was thus visiting with merited chastisement and scorn the usurpations of an imperial despot, and an unprincipled nobility, he omitted upon no occasion to denounce in terms still more emphatic the rebellion of the sectarian democracy. "The peasantry," he observes, "ought to be destroyed, rather than the magistrates and princes, because there is no divine authority for the people taking the sword. Neither toleration nor mercy is due to the peasants: they are worthy only of the just anger of God and man; and should be treated like mad dogs." In fact, the duty of abstaining from resistance to constituted authorities by force of arms was uniformly taught by Luther, to an extent which, in the present age, would be considered as amounting to servility and feebleness of spirit.

In all this, however, as well as in a reply to the elector, who, doubtless at the instigation of some of his alarmed fellow-sovereigns, had remonstrated with Luther on the extreme license of expression which pervaded the book on Secular Powers, and as in almost every remarkable act of his life, we recognise the constancy, the clearness, and the strength of the great reformer's trust in the protective providence of heaven. "It is no hard thing," he writes, "for Christ to defend Christ, in this cause of mine; a cause with which the elector has been led to concern himself solely by the influence and direction of the Almighty. If I saw any means of withdrawing myself, without loss and dishonour to the truth, my life itself would be a sacrifice not

to be regretted. I have well pondered my situation for now more than a year; and should I be dragged to the extreme punishment of death, that will be only a mode of deliverance for me. But since we are not able to penetrate the designs of God, let us keep ourselves ever assured, by saying, *Thy will be done.*"

Whatever may have been the *general* effect of the last-named work, it was, like many other portions of Luther's writings, eagerly laid hold of, as affording something like a pretext for some of the inferior nobility to be active in directing the hostility of the peasants mainly against the electoral princes and the hierarchy; a policy of which, in numerous instances, the real motive was nothing more than a hope of at once diverting popular fury from them, the minor barons, and participating in the promised spoil of their wealthier and more powerful neighbours.

Meanwhile, Melancthon, who had been often and unsuccessfully importuned by his illustrious friend to publish his long-written Annotations on the Epistle to the Romans, was astonished to receive a printed copy of them, prefaced by an apologetic letter from Luther for having secretly possessed himself of the manuscript, and committed it to the press. "Martin Luther," so runs the preface, "to Philip Melancthon, grace and peace in Christ. 'Be angry, and sin not. Commune with your heart upon your bed, and be still.' I am the person who has dared to publish your commentary, and now send you your own work. If you are pleased with it, all will be well: but if not, it is enough that you please us. If I have done wrong, the fault is your own. Why did you not publish it yourself? I threaten you, further, to steal and publish your notes on the

Book of Genesis and the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, if you do not anticipate me by giving them to the world."

About the same period occurred the escape of Catherine de Bora, (afterward the amiable wife of Luther,) and eight of her companions, from the convent of Nimpsch. The flight of these nuns from the unnatural restrictions of the cloister, under a full persuasion of the sinfulness and folly of their self-abstraction from society, drew from the reformer his exposition of the unauthorized and inobligatory nature of conventual "vows of virginity:" a work than which none has been more diligently suppressed by the Church of Rome, wherever her jurisdiction is acknowledged.

Among the events occurring at this part of Luther's history, the commencement of the sacramental controversy, and the expulsion of Carlostadt from the dominions of the elector Frederic, may be briefly noted. On relinquishing his appointments in the church and University of Wittenberg, the ex-professor and arch-deacon of that city had retired to the principality of Altenberg, where his zeal and learning drew to his side a number of the burghers, who, espousing his views of the communion, and his horror of paintings and images in churches, had incurred the electoral displeasure by raising tumults and disorder in the town.

Having been summoned to return to Wittenberg, and there resume his duties as a preacher, but failing to comply with the summons, he was soon afterward ordered to withdraw himself from Saxony. To his supporters in Altenberg he wrote that he was *chased, without having been heard or conquered, by Martin Lu-*

*ther.* The same accusation of having instigated the elector to banish his former friend has been reiterated against Luther by many adverse and some friendly historians ; but the charge is altogether gratuitous. The reformer himself more than once explicitly denied that he had in any manner intervened to direct his sovereign's anger toward Carlostadt ; and indeed the only circumstance which has given a colour to the imputation, is that of Luther having once written to the elector, beseeching him to lend no countenance to the exorbitant professions of the Anabaptists. With this sect, however, Carlostadt had, notwithstanding the seditious tendencies and flagrant hallucinations which dishonoured it, condescended in some measure to connect himself ; making a hollow and ambiguous pretence of subscribing generally to the wild and flagitious insanities which it held for doctrines.

That Luther, when he wrote to the electoral prince of Saxony the letter just mentioned, was aware of his ancient companion's connection with Munzer's enthusiasts, does not appear ; while the blunt intrepidity, and customary plainness of speech, which were never known to abandon the reformer, forbid us to believe that in the admonitory suggestions of that letter a covert petition was couched for the expatriation of a petulant, but not powerless, doctrinal antagonist. Remembering the overstrained austerity of Luther's dealings, upon one occasion, with this the most unhappy of his pristine coadjutors,—an excess to which it is only too probable were to be traced the subsequent errors of Carlostadt's career,—it is satisfactory to know that when, a few months later, the revolted peasants, with their visionary ringleaders, were effectually suppress-

ed, Luther did not fail to use his best exertions to procure a revocation of the mandate which had driven into exile the alienated friend of his youth. The result of the reformer's intercession on behalf of Carlostadt was a permission to the latter to settle, according to his wish, at Kemberg; where he died in indigence, and deep sorrow for his past errors, in 1542. His cession (not, it is true, unprovoked, but still most injudicious and unworthy) from the principles, as well as the society, of his primitive colleagues, proved a source of life-long disaster and unhappiness to himself, while it deprived the Reformation of an auxiliary who might have rendered estimable service; and, neutralizing even the best of his subsequent and individual labours in the cause, has left a shadow on his name.

It may be added to this account of the reformer and his labours during the year 1524, that, toward its close, he laid aside the monastic habit, which hitherto he had worn; renouncing likewise the monastic life, to which he no longer considered himself as bound: the engagements he had formerly contracted being plainly unlawful, imposing an unauthorized restraint upon true Christian liberty, and opening the way for numerous and very fearful evils.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE year 1525 was marked at its very commencement by wars and tumults. The Imperialists had invaded France in the autumn of the preceding year ; but, through the judicious measures adopted by Francis, they had been obliged to retreat with great loss, so that the emperor was in no condition to attempt to coerce his great German vassals. The king of France, not satisfied with freeing his own dominions from a foreign foe, followed his rival into Italy, and besieged Pavia ; before which place his troops were encamped when the year opened. The siege had already lasted more than two months, and the town still held out, being gallantly defended by the imperial general, Antonio de Leyva, an officer of high rank, and patient, but at the same time enterprising courage. The rigour of the season made the task of the besiegers more difficult ; but they persevered with great ardour ; and had Francis acted with ordinary judgment, the town must have yielded. But highly gifted as he was, and, for the most part, of a noble and generous spirit, he was the creature of impulse and passion. Not long before, by a series of persecutions equally bitter and unjust, he had so exasperated the constable Bourbon as to drive him to go over to the emperor, whose power he thus very effectually increased, while that of Francis was proportionably weakened. Having secured the neutrality of the pope, instead of bending all his force to the reduction of Pavia, he detached no less than six thousand men from the besieging army for the invasion



of Naples. The imperial generals wisely took no notice of this. They knew that if Francis were unsuccessful in the Milanese, the Neapolitan invasion would come to nothing. They directed their whole attention, therefore, to the besieging army, now so injudiciously diminished; and the event proved how sound was the judgment they had formed on the real state of affairs.

In February the imperial troops, under Pescara and Bourbon, approached the French camp. The more cautious of the advisers of Francis recommended him to retreat, for that in a short time the imperial army would, from the difficulties of its position, either be disbanded or greatly reduced; while himself, occupying some strong post, might wait for reinforcements and supplies from France, and be ready to take advantage of the first favourable opportunity for attacking the Imperialists. Counsel like this did not agree with the ardent feelings of the monarch. Retreat, he thought, would obscure his fame. He resolved to fight; and the consequence was the battle of Pavia, (fought on February 3d, 1525,) from the effects of which he never fully recovered. His army was totally beaten, and he himself taken prisoner, and, after a short time, sent to Spain, where he continued in captivity the whole of the year. But even these favourable occurrences left little more leisure to his fortunate rival for attending to the internal state of the various German principalities. He had to adopt measures for securing and improving the opportunities of extending success afforded by the victory of Pavia; and the Italian princes, and the pope himself, jealous of his power, threw in his way all the obstacles they could command. Louisa of Savoy, the

mother of Francis, to whom he had committed the government in his absence, rose with the exigency of her condition. Charles, though accustomed to great self-restraint, had yet been so elated by the battle of Pavia, and the captivity of a great monarch, that he seems to have forgotten his usual caution, and to have fancied his position much stronger than in reality it was. He had therefore treated Henry of England with coolness; and, supposing that he no longer needed the good offices of the aspiring and irritable Wolsey, he withdrew his former expressions of friendship. The king and his minister were thus alike exasperated; and Louisa, discovering this, hastened to improve the favourable opportunity, and induced Henry to conclude with her a defensive treaty, and to engage that he would use his best offices for the release of Francis from his imprisonment. The attention of the ambitious emperor was thus directed to so many objects, that, as in former years, Lutheranism, though not overlooked, and though his disapprobation was often strongly expressed, had nevertheless time both to strike its roots deep in the soil, and to spread its branches more widely.

The insurrectionary movements of the German peasantry, now connected with the fanatical adherents of Munzer, came this year to their crisis. In its earlier days the revolt broke out in Thuringia, a province subject to the elector of Saxony. In other parts of Germany the usual consequences of insurrection had occurred. Its first movements had been successful, and the passions of the revolters had led to all kinds of violence. Eventually, however, the power of the nobles, when fully brought to bear on their undisci-

plined opponents, had been sufficient to reduce them to their former subjection. But in Thuringia, where Munzer commanded in person, religious fanaticism lent its aid to the spirit of revolt, and the struggle continued till the opening of summer. He stimulated his deceived and wretched adherents to depose the magistrates in every town of which they obtained possession; and compelled all persons, whether nobles or burghers, upon pain of death, to put on the common habiliments of the labouring populace, and to renounce all their titles of distinction. For some months the lenient temper of the elector, combined with other circumstances, which drew away his attention from these disturbances, permitted the Anabaptist demagogue to pursue his revolutionizing course without hinderance or molestation. But at length the height to which his crazy insolence had risen, and the large accessions of numerical support which every day brought to his cause, called for the vigorous interference of the prince-palatine to check the progress of disorder, and rescue a fine tract of territory from total devastation. In conjunction therefore with the duke of Brunswick and the landgrave of Hesse-Homberg, Frederic had assembled a considerable body of troops, and prepared to inflict summary vengeance on the invaders of the public safety. Before having recourse, however, to an armed assault, these princes, with a prudent and commendable humanity, made trial of negotiation, inviting the inflamed peasants to return peaceably to their homes, and assuring them of prompt and effectual relief from the pressure of their genuine causes of discontent. Fearful of the doom which was not unlikely to await himself, in case of his desertion by the infuriate rabble

who surrounded him, Munzer would listen to no overtures ; but, rejecting all terms of compromise, inveighed against the faithlessness of the secular princes, and incited his lawless partisans to a still wilder enthusiasm, and more impudent atrocity. To crush the rebellious mob by the strong arm of military power was thus made inevitable ; and accordingly, in May, 1525, the electoral forces marched upon the rebel camp at Frankenhausen. The fanatical chieftain, who appears to have been not overburdened with personal bravery, was at first desirous of saving himself by flight ; but finding that the army of the princes had, by surrounding his position, cut off all chance of escape, he gathered courage from necessity to lead his disciples into battle. The opening of the struggle was precluded by an act of gratuitous barbarity, which, as having deeply exasperated the electoral commanders, can alone account for the terrific slaughter which ensued. Anxious to the last to spare the lives of his deluded subjects, the elector John (who had just succeeded his brother) despatched a young nobleman of his suite, to offer pardon to the insurgent peasantry, on condition of laying down their weapons, and surrendering their leaders. To these proposals the multitude, in momentary terror of the bristling array which hedged them in on every side, betrayed a disposition to yield ; when Munzer, animated by the urgent danger to himself, addressed them in one of those phrenetic effusions which had often before stirred them to deeds of rapine and of blood. Exhorting them to rely fearlessly upon the omnipotent aid of God, he gave them a vehement assurance of entire safety and victory in the impending contest, told them of miracles that should be wrought

in their favour, and confidently vowed to receive all the enemy's bullets harmless in his own mantle. While he spoke, a rainbow (the symbol which was emblazoned on their banners) appeared in the heavens. "See," cried the enthusiast, "the token which God sends you! Behold the pledge of your triumph, and the destruction of the wicked!" The last words sufficed to kindle the fanaticism of his hearers into fury. They fell upon the unhappy envoy who awaited their answer to the proposals of his sovereign, and tore him to pieces, amidst mingled hymns and execrations. In a paroxysm of fanatical rage and desperation, they rushed into the combat, singing with a vaunting and wild energy, which appropriately signified their recovered recklessness of life and pain, "Come, Holy Ghost," &c. Their song was the pæan of a self-immolating frenzy; for, of eight thousand peasants, whom the morning sun saw collected at Frankenhau- sen, more than five thousand perished in the conflict. Munzer himself was captured, and condemned to be executed as a traitor; a fate which he encountered with a singular lack of heroism for one who had mainly helped to set an empire in a blaze of sedition.

So terminated the career of this extraordinary mad- man; and with it the perilous revolt which his ravings had fomented. In those parts of Germany where the Reformation took root, the beneficent offices of a pure Christianity speedily disclosed themselves in the ame- liorated condition of the inferior grades of the social fabric. But throughout the rest of the electoral prin- cipalities the seeds of future insurrection were so thickly sown, that the wars, foreign and internal, of the next century may be regarded as events which,

by diverting popular attention from the sores of the community, abridging the actual power of the church and the feudal aristocracy to enforce the full sum of their old rapacity, and gradually wearing out the last fetters of a barbarous allodial servitude, conferred no insubstantial benefit on the Germanic nations, and preserved them from the recurrence of a worse species of contest. The struggles of the palatinate, indeed, and the Protestant league, were something in the nature of revolts, justified by religious persecution, and the grasp of an illegitimate authority. But they were altogether on too large a scale, and under conduct too liberal and wise, to bear any analogy to that harassing, unconcerted, and spasmodic warfare which, had the current of affairs flowed in a direction different from the precise course it took, might have at once converted the history of the empire into a narrative of incendiary risings, and the perpetual fluctuations of democratic passion; and, by thus keeping the public mind in constant disunion and alarm, materially embarrassed the progress of the Reformation.

## CHAPTER XV.

ONLY ten days before the defeat of the insurgents at Frankenhäusen, on the 5th of May, 1525, Frederic, justly surnamed "the Wise," expired; having given satisfactory testimony in his last moments of his personal appreciation of the great and vital truths which he had eminently contributed to bring into wide circulation. Against the memory of this virtuous and able prince it has sometimes been alleged that his habitual caution was excessive, and bordered on defect of moral courage. The grounds of this charge are, the letter written by him, in 1522, to Leo X., deprecating the displeasure of that pontiff, and professing his innocence of an active adhesion to the Lutheran cause; his failure to avow himself the patron of the reformers, after the Diet of Worms; and, generally, the undivulged and covert protection which he accorded to them. A more erroneous estimate of a noble character than is here implied, it would be difficult to conceive. So far from manifesting the timorous disposition which this accusation imputes to him, the letter of Frederic to the pope is admirable for its dispassionate maintenance of that grand principle of justice, that no man ought to be condemned without a candid and full hearing. Beyond this sentiment,—a sentiment which, under all the circumstances of the case, was sufficiently distasteful to the holy see,—the elector had the temerity to warn the pope of danger to be incurred by the severities then in contemplation against Luther. The moral boldness of these admonitions, the happier condition

of the European family in our own times leads some of us to undervalue. The enormous influence of the pontifical crown is too much left out of sight ; while the involuntary and almost invincible subjugation bound upon individual minds, by the force of ancestral example, and the lessons of early life, is equally forgotten. These things considered, the electoral remonstrance ought, we think, to be viewed as indicative of more than common intrepidity. So deep, it is to be remembered, and so universal was the veneration of the supposed sanctity and supremacy of the church, that even Luther had never yet suffered himself to doubt of her authority. The fountain and abode of that authority, whether it properly resided in the pontiff, or in the representative council of the whole body of Christendom, he had indeed newly begun to question : but that there was present, *somewhere* in the ecclesiastical constitution, an appellate jurisdiction and power of ultimate decision in matters of belief, and that of such power the pope was the appropriate and highest organ, had not been brought into dispute. But in judging of the elector's conduct, we must also recollect, that for several years he was placed in the very difficult position of having to shield from assaults, which he felt to be unjust, both in their object and their method, men whose doctrines he had not absolutely determined to embrace. Well persuaded that in their theological notions the truth lay with the reformers, and cordially approving of their emendations of the Saxon ritual, it was not till near the close of his existence that he was able to shake off every vestige of an inherited allegiance to the ecclesiastical sovereignty. At the Diet of Worms he strenuously and successfully protested against the



proscription of Luther, unheard in his own vindication; and when, by the artful shaping of the interrogatories, and the prejudices of the imperial tribunal, the masterly and brave defence of the reformer was rendered nugatory, he found means to defeat the malice of the churchmen and their secular confederates. It is, moreover, an ascertained fact, that before that period Frederic had extorted from the emperor a distinct pledge never to use the sword for the cure of supposed errors in religion; a pledge which, though the Punic faith of Charles V. often contemplated its violation, was surely dictated by a calm and patriotic heroism, that, sustained by a clear sense of duty, could dare to set at naught the fulminations of the Vatican.

But other and abundant reasons were not wanting to justify the actual policy of the elector. An open and premature profession of the reformed faith, so far from benefiting the original advocates of that better and regenerate creed, would have served only, by discrediting their illustrious friend in the imperial regard, additionally to jeopardize their individual safety and their common object. By standing where he did stand,—mediate between the hostile parties,—careful, on one side, to give no occasion for suspicion or attack by the emperor, and, on the other, equally resolved to allow of no invasion of the liberties of his native subjects, the sagacious elector secured for the Lutheran teachers the fair field, and practical immunity from the touch of persecution, which was all they needed. These points ascertained, as by the provident wisdom of Frederic they were, the inherent rectitude of the reformer's doctrine had free scope and opportunity to become known in Germany, and being known, to be

fairly tried against the immemorial corruptions which it denounced. It would have been far easier to act a part less wary and prudential. The electoral prince might undoubtedly, at any moment, have proclaimed his cordial attachment to the inceptive Reformation, he might have expressly abjured the pontifical sway, and formally abrogated, in his own dominions, the Roman ritual. But besides that so peremptory a repudiation of the ancient and general belief of the German federacy would have been construed into a virtual renouncement of the imperial constitution, by the assumption of a power unknown to its theory and provisions; besides the inexpediency, not to say madness, of thus challenging the warm antagonism of the emperor, and adding to the superstitious intolerance of every Papal client in the diet the rancour of political jealousy; the advantages to have been in any way derived from such a proceeding are more than questionable. According to all human calculation, it is certain that had the elector of Saxony thus placed himself ostentatiously in the front of the struggle, the principles of the reformed religion would not have gained so swift and safe an access as, in fact, they did gain, to other regions than were subject to his own favourable rule. The times, in short, were not ripe, till near the end of Frederic's life, for a demonstration so unusual and decisive. The course of events, shortly after his demise, conducted his brother and successor to a situation less delicate, and demanding, not indeed a more resolute, (for the peculiar praise of Frederic's whole line of conduct is its singular unity and fixedness of purpose, under circumstances which powerfully tended to beget infirmity and vacillation,) but a more overt and ostensible sup-

port from the electorate, to the salient and renovated form of Christianity, which had waxed great under its shadow. In looking back upon the memorable era now in view, we are struck by the large space which the name of this generous and wise prince fills in history; a name illustrated by no associations of conquest, no palpable pre-eminence over the electoral sovereigns of circumjacent provinces, nor by any of the chivalrous splendours which hang about the memory of so many of his contemporaries, but conspicuous in the simple and quiet grandeur of a broad intellect and a noble heart. Without a stain upon the brightness of his public reputation, the vices and the foibles incident to princely rank seem to have found no lurking-place, no congenial weakness, in his nature. Even "that last infirmity of noble minds," ambition, would appear to have held no empire over him. Upright as he was benevolent, and inaccessible to the proffered blandishments of a supreme station, his refusal of the imperial crown was an act of deliberate and pure disinterestedness, which, we do not fear to say, has no example in the annals of Europe. Melancthon, in his funeral oration, has well described him as a prince whose accomplishments were equalled only by his moral worth. But the eloquent and universal sorrow of his subjects was a finer, a more touching and appropriate, tribute to his virtues, than even the graceful eulogy of the Wittenberg professor.

While the "war of the peasants" raged in Germany, the Swiss reformers, Zuinglius and Œcolampadius, through whose labours the gospel had obtained a home among the Alps, made many converts to their doctrine of the eucharist. Among the rest, Bucer, a man of

high and various endowments, who may be taken to have been the Protestant apostle of the Upper Rhine, had followed their example in denying the corporeal presence. Zuinglius, the originator of the Helvetic Reformation, had, from the first, leaned to the true interpretation of the sacramental institute ; and, on the appearance of Carlostadt's earliest argument upon the subject, had given his sanction to the view developed in that publication. Meantime, Œcolampadius, who in 1521 insisted on the literal acceptance of the Saviour's words concerning the elements in the last supper, had read a recantation, and sustained his amended opinion with much force of reasoning and illustration. It was not, however, until the year 1525 that the sentiments of the Helvetian divines were thrust so prominently forward as to attract the public notice of Luther. In that year, a book, bearing the name of Zuinglius, and purporting to be a commentary "De verâ et falsâ Religione," issued from the press of Zurich, in which it was strongly contended that the material types in the holy communion were neither transmuted, as the Papists held, into the corporeal substance of the Redeemer, nor pervaded, and, as it were, *impregnated*, by that substance ; but only symbols and commemorative tokens of the great piacular oblation for the sin of the world. In this treatise Luther is not referred to by name although it is clear that the negation of the consubstantiative theory was pointedly aimed at that last modification and relic of Popery which clung to him. Foremost among the Lutherans to combat the Swiss doctrine was Bugenhagen, better known as Pomeranus. But though he was generally an acute thinker, and a not unlearned theologian, the reply of Pomeranus is

remarkable neither for controversial skill, nor felicity in the exposition of the very vulnerable tenet which he advocated. The divines of Zurich and Basle rejoined with a prompt and overwhelming force, which brought up the Saxon arch-reformer himself to the succour of his defeated partisan. In a work which Luther published in 1526, as well as in a sermon of proximate date, he maintains the actual union of the human personality of Christ with the consecrated signs of his sacrificial self-surrender, with singular peremptoriness and vigour. Laying peculiar emphasis on the express declaration of our Saviour to his disciples, "This is my body," &c., he affirmed the attempt to explain that declaration as a mere metonymy to be fraught with peril to many of the cardinal verities of the evangelical system, inasmuch as it would establish a precedent for frittering away the obvious import of Scripture by metaphorical and arbitrary constructions. Both of these compositions were severally answered by Œcolampadius and Zuinglius, who with considerable ability exposed the manifold absurdities involved in Luther's dogma of consubstantiation.

In all the writings, on either side, to which this dispute gave rise, there is not a little of that polemical vehemence which was characteristic of the age. Of the personal acrimony and recriminative insults which defiled the earlier discussions with the Papal champions, it is, however, satisfactory to observe, that no trace occurs in the records of the sacramental controversy. Though indulging in a license of reproach, and a pungency of sarcastic rebuke, to which the dialectical exhibitions of our own times present no parallel, as the customs of society show no toleration, all parties mu-

tually regarded one another with the respect due to men who, with high talents and large acquisitions, were earnest and sincere in their search after truth. The whole discussion does indeed furnish matter of regret, as it prevented that cordial union of the reformers of adjacent countries which the exigences of their common cause required, as well in formal as in more essential points. It is, nevertheless, consolatory to remark what purity of motive actuated the dissentient leaders; while the solitary remnant of speculative error which lingered in the Lutheran theology was in some measure redeemed by that spirit of reverent cautiousness which it betokened. Nothing perhaps was more demonstrative of Luther's mission from heaven, than his perpetual and devout (although, in this one instance, mistaken) care not to let the smallest particle of evangelical doctrine be inadvertently so confounded with the multiform abuses woven around it by the craft and impiety of the popedom, as to share, along with those abuses, the rejecting scorn of honest and enlightened men.

The habit and the principles which were thus apparent, even in the maintenance of the single erroneous article in the reformer's creed, constitute one of the surest tests of a true providential designation to the work of restoring, to a world overshadowed with darkness and moral desolation, the vitality and light of truth.

It was in this year that Luther entered the "holy estate of matrimony." If the subject were not too serious for any approach to playfulness, it would be most amusing to witness the pretended horror of the opponents of the reformer when they refer to this event. Maimbourg, for instance, whose whole work is that of

a violent partisan, whose object was by any means to blast the character of the subject of his history, states, that "in that very year which witnessed a public calamity," (the war of the peasants,) "of which Luther, if not the immediate cause, was at least the occasion, he was so blinded by an infamous passion, for which even his friends blushed, that with a bold and hardened front he *celebrated his nuptials*." Among some nuns, it seems, who had believed it to be their duty to renounce their conventual engagements, was one whose personal attractions strongly wrought upon the mind of Luther.\* While the elector Frederic lived, who was averse to

\* *Hujus pulchritudinem Lutherus observavit, et ejusque amore vehementur captus est.*—Maimbourg wishes to represent the whole affair as one of unbridled passion. Luther married the object of his affection, notwithstanding she had lived two entire years at Wittenberg, "*cum licentia, inter juvenes academicos:*" a slander for which there was not the slightest foundation, whether this pretended historian invented it himself or not. He must have placed great reliance upon the prejudiced credulity of his readers, when he ventured to write thus. But he wrote for what are called "Catholic countries." What was the reformer's crime? Attached to a beautiful, talented, well-born female, *he married her*. Maimbourg was not ignorant of the conduct of the clergy, of the cardinals, of the popes; and his manner of writing amply justifies the accusation often brought against Rome, that to break the disciplinary regulations of the church is a greater sin than to break the law of God. The priest who violates his vow may be forgiven, if he only does it by breaking the law of God; but if he enter a state which the Scriptures declare to be "honourable in all," he is straightway (be it again said, with *pretended* horror) reprehended as the mere slave of passion. Conscious of the hypocritical character of his paragraphs, the Jesuit must have laughed in his sleeve while penning them, and hoping to make the bulk of his readers believe what he well knew to be false.

all great changes, Luther dared not venture on such a step as marriage! But "as soon as the eyes of that prince were closed he felt himself placed at full liberty; as knowing that the new elector, in his idolatrous regard for this false prophet, would permit him to act as he pleased." It was by such a style of writing as this that the calm and cautious Seckendorff was moved to say, that the professions of modesty with which the Jesuit opens his history were to be considered rather as affected, or even as ironical, than as serious and sincere.

It was in the month of June, 1525, that this marriage of Luther with Catharine de Bora, the escaped nun of Nimpsch, took place: an event the more interesting that it set the seal of example to their mutual abnegation of the celibate vow. This lady was the daughter of one of the minor nobles of the Saxon palatinate, whose want of fortune adequate to his rank had condemned her, early in life, to the cloister. After her flight from the conventual durance, in which she had passed some seven or eight years, she was supported, at Luther's instance, as were also her companions, by the electoral bounty. The immediate cause of her renouncing the veil having been Luther's treatise on the obligation of the monastic oath, it was not unnatural that when brought into daily contact with the author of a work which to her had been the signal of restored liberty, and in some sort made dependant upon his protection, the warm and grateful regard engendered by these circumstances should ripen into personal affection. Luther himself, entertaining a high opinion of her character, had promoted the suit of his friend Glass, the reformed pastor of Orlamundé, who was passion-



ately attached to her ; but from becoming the wife of that divine, Catharine recoiled. It has not uncommonly been represented, that this marriage was an arrangement of mere convenience, involving little of attachment on either side. We are mistaken, however, if the delicate hint given by the emancipated recluse to Amsdorff, on his proposing to her to unite herself to the curate of Orlamundé, did not betray a cordial and decided preference for Luther. The gentle and half-playful intimation that even he, the mediator in the business, *or his illustrious friend*, would have been a more agreeable selection, is just one of those equivocal and disguised betrayals in which an amiable and retiring woman may be supposed to have allowed the secret of her affections to escape her. So at least Luther seems to have thought ; for although he had previously encouraged other suitors to address his fair disciple, probably under an impression that a conjugal connection with himself could hardly be desirable to her, he now, with a promptitude indicative of any feeling rather than indifference, offered her his hand. Admiration of her virtues, coupled as they were with the possession of accomplishments that rarely adorned the feminine intellect in those days, he had always and fervently professed. We are also told that she was beautiful, a charm to which Luther's enthusiasm for music and the arts proves him to have been exquisitely sensible.

This alliance, which Luther states to have been in accordance with the earnest wish of his father, and which was the main earthly solace of a life led in the midst of a thousand difficulties and heart-burnings, was generally, but somewhat unreasonably, censured, even

by his friends. Not that they saw cause to be dissatisfied with the particular choice which he had made ; on the contrary, every one allowed the excellence of Catherine de Bora ; but because they looked upon *his* marriage with any person as unseasonable, and were apprehensive lest the endearing and new ties of coming years should warp the mind of their apostle from its former vigilance in guarding and directing the salient spirit of the Reformation. Melancthon, indeed, writing to Camerarius upon the subject, intimates a hope that, ill-timed as he considered the recent union to have been, the fiery and stern spirit of Luther might, in the bland atmosphere of domestic love, be soothed and purged from its constitutional asperities.

The Papists, on the other hand, were ready, with a variety of slanderous inventions, to feed fat the ancient grudge they bore to the reformer, by piling the same obloquy upon the head of his young bride which they had long been used to cast upon himself. Among many and equally malignant absurdities, his defamers raked up the prophecy of some nameless astrological dotard of the dark ages, who had foretold that antichrist should be the issue of a perjured vestal and an apostate monk : a prediction which, as Erasmus, with the covert and sly irony in which he delighted, took occasion to remark, had been so often accomplished, that Europe must have seen many hundred editions of antichrist before either Luther or his wife were born.

Marriage, however, produced no relaxation in the arduous labours of the reformer. The refreshment which he derived from the society of his new associate, and who proved to be indeed a "help meet for him," only strengthened him for renewed application to his

beloved employments. He this year wrote Annotations on the Book of Deuteronomy ; in the preface to which he evinced the sound judgment with which he considered the books of the Old Testament generally. "What else is the New Testament," he asks, "but, in effect, an open declaration of the various sentences and promises of the Old, all now fulfilled and completed by Jesus Christ?" He fails not, of course, to bring forward his favourite subject, genuine obedience to God, springing from "the faith which worketh by love." Thus, on the fifth verse of the sixth chapter he writes : "When he says, 'Thou shalt love the Lord,' he excites to a free and cheerful service of God. For when I love God, then do I will all things that God wills ; nor is anything more sweet than to hear and do the things which God commands. As by faith we receive all things freely from God, so by love we do all things freely for God."

The reader is almost tempted to smile when he finds him most correctly, but at the same time most adroitly, referring to the principles which justified his own earnestness and zeal : "If I love God with my whole heart, nothing will more offend me than any contemptuous treatment of the commands of God. So did Paul mourn and weep to the Corinthians and Galatians, when he saw the glory of God trampled upon. But where are they now who would lament to see the name of God trampled under foot throughout the whole world?" Very significant also is the brief remark pointedly applicable to many of the objectors to his recent marriage : "How perverse are they who are so careful to exact obedience to their own sayings and appointments, but who suffer the precepts of God to be neglected !"

The same month which saw the illustrious elector-palatine laid in the grave, witnessed also the first imposition of unepiscopal hands upon an evangelical preacher (Rorarius) at Wittenberg. By this ordination Luther gave a further proof of his daily increasing departure from the prescriptive usages of the Romish hierarchy. In the prosecution of his war against the various corruptions of the Papacy, he had been drawn onward, step by step, in a keen investigation of the origin of the pontifical supremacy. Of that investigation, one incident result was a conviction in his own mind that the episcopal office, as it then existed, and with the claims which it then put forth, was only of human institution, and that it was not the exclusively-appointed method of conveying ecclesiastical authority for the exercise of the functions of the ministry. It is one thing to believe that the episcopal form of church government is a lawful one, and that there are passages of Scripture which abundantly justify the exercise of inspection and authority over both churches and ministers by one person, himself only a minister like his brethren, and placed, perhaps, by themselves in authority over them for the sake both of peace and order, and a more efficient government;—it is one thing to believe that such a mode of government is lawful, is useful, is countenanced by Scripture; but another, and a very different thing, to suppose that the bishop is an officer appointed by Christ himself, by whom only certain ministerial functions are to be performed, and who constitutes, solely and exclusively, the principle of visible ecclesiastical union. The office itself, as implying ministerial and extended oversight, is undoubtedly of high antiquity in the Christian church, and may easily

be conceived to be one of great spiritual advantage ; but surely it forfeits its real dignity, and endangers its strongest claim, in the approbation of thoughtful Christians, when it assumes to be the sole depository of some authority delegated from Christ, necessary to the existence of the church, and essential to the validity of the ministerial character, and the efficacy of the ministerial functions. Not on this ground did men like Jewell rest their arguments in its favour. "I grant," said that eminent writer and ornament of the English Episcopal bench, "that the primates had authority over other inferior bishops. Howbeit, they had it by agreement and custom, but neither by Christ, nor by Peter or Paul, nor by any right of God's word. St. Hierome saith, 'Let bishops understand that they are above priests rather of custom than of any truth or right of Christ's institution, and that they ought to rule the church together.' And again, 'Therefore a priest and a bishop are both one thing ; and before that, by the inflaming of the devil, parts were taken in religion, and then words were uttered among the people, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Peter, the churches were governed by the common advice of the priests.' And St. Augustine saith, 'The office of a bishop is above the office of a priest,' (not by authority of the Scriptures, but) 'after the names of honour which the custom of the church hath now obtained.'"

The position which Luther took was such as might have been expected from his strong sense and habitual reference to the sacred volume. He took the general ground, that *by the ministry* were *candidates for the ministry* to be examined and sent forth. That this examination and authorization had been confined to

the bishops or overseers, he saw to be a matter of by-law, of ecclesiastical regulation. Whereas, it was plain that upon him and his coadjutors devolved the duty of supplying with an efficient ministry the churches which he had reformed or raised up. He preached the word of God; converts were multiplied; they required spiritual supervision; and from the men who were their fathers in the Lord they had a right to look for it. And in this there was succession, even visibly, so far as the ministry was concerned; but especially there was fellowship with the apostles by identity of doctrine, of spirit, of labour. And there was fellowship with Christ by direct and personal faith on their part, and by the gift of the Spirit, and the recognition of their labours, on his part. They who were one with Christ had, in and through Christ, part in the communion of saints, and in the true fellowship of the universal church.

This was the solid and liberal position which Luther assumed. Not, surely, ignorant of the writings of the fathers, nor recklessly bent on rearing up a new fabric according to the mere dictates of his own caprice, he could find, neither in those writings, nor in the far more estimable remains of their inspired predecessors, no imperative rule laid down, no absolute model of the form of a Christian community prescribed for universal imitation. Persuaded that a precise moulding of the young church of the Reformation to the literal shape, and the internal discipline, which existed in the days of primeval Christianity, was in no respect binding upon him, his clear and strong sense perceived that the best constitution of a religious body was that which, recognising original principles, and

adapting itself to instant circumstances, tended most to develop and to keep alive practical and fervent piety in its members ; while his masculine self-reliance, and habit of acting on conviction, outweighed whatever vestiges of predilection for an ancient usage may have lingered in his thoughts. Nor did he fail to appreciate and gratefully acknowledge the provident wisdom which, foreseeing the emergence of events, such as had recently occurred in Germany, had left Christians, in all ages, free to adopt such particular modes of church government as should be suitable to the actual conditions of their time. In truth, Luther appears to have willingly postponed the regular digest and formation of a new scheme of polity until those circumstantial hints, which he well knew to be no issues of chance, had so multiplied around him, as to indicate the exact figure and organization into which it would be most expedient finally to conform the Christian society that was springing up under his pastoral care. The ordination to which we have adverted was the first overt expression of his entire liberation from the superstitions regarding the episcopal consecration of priests ; but it was not till some years later that, after deliberating long, and taking anxious and frequent counsel with the wisest of his pious associates, he definitively fixed upon a plan for the framework and mechanism of the evangelical church.

The remainder of the year was not spent by Luther in idleness. The emperor was now in Spain, busily engaged in those plans to which the prolonged captivity of his rival gave rise. And the additional power which he had thus acquired, had awakened the fears of Clement, who, that he might protect the interests

of Italy in general, and of the holy see in particular, was not unwilling to join the league that the queen-mother of France was seeking to form in behalf of her imprisoned son. Ferdinand, who ruled in his brother's name in Germany, was not ignorant of this, and was not, on his part, unwilling to play the Protestants against the pope. Seeming to condemn them, even the power that might have been opposed to them was not exerted; and thus the mutual jealousies of the head of the empire and the head of the church gave opportunity to the reformers to apply themselves, with their wonted assiduity, to the work of their providential vocation.

Toward the close of the year, Luther replied to the treatise published by Erasmus the year before. He did not enter so much into metaphysical distinctions, as into what appeared to him to be the great facts of Scripture. Whatever Erasmus might say, as a philosopher, on human power, he met by the saying of Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing;" and by that of St. Paul, "It is God that worketh in us to will and to do." He asserted the bondage of the will by reason of sin; and declared that man could "do all things" only through "Christ strengthening him."

Erasmus himself presents a melancholy example of talents, not indeed totally hidden and buried, but yet withheld from the object in favour of which they would have been most successfully employed. He possessed what, for the day, were immense stores of learning, and he saw, and at the same time keenly animadverted upon, the vices of the Papal system. Whether intentionally or not, he had pointed out the absolute necessity of reform; but when the work of reform com-



menced, he could not persuade himself to join in its labours, and to expose himself to its dangers. He was rather a man of learning than of religion. He saw the disease, but he understood not the remedy. Nor was he willing either to exasperate his learned friends, or to submit to the obloquy of innovation. He had, indeed, given to the world those vivid descriptions of the reigning corruptions of the priesthood which stimulated the desire of change, in many instances, into a passion; and his caustic and satirical denunciations were, in point of fact, as thoroughly opposed to Romanism, as the more serious and argumentative, though equally bitter, invectives of Luther himself. But he shrunk from the tumult he had contributed to excite. Though conversant with religious subjects, he had not imbibed the religious spirit; nor could he at all understand the fervent and entire devotion of Luther to the cause of truth, considered as the cause of God and his Christ. The errors and mistakes of the great reformer, who was yet only a man, he, in his leisure and coolness, could easily detect; and some atonement for his attacks on the Papacy he now endeavoured to make, by attacking Luther likewise. He himself disclosed his own character when he said that *he had not courage to be a martyr*. Professing to condemn the *manner and style* of Luther, he in reality condemned *the very substance of his cause* when he said, "Although Luther had never written anything which was not in itself good, I should nevertheless have been much offended by the seditious freedom of his manner. *I would rather be wrong in some particulars, than make such a disturbance in the world for the sake of truth.*"

Such was Erasmus. The centuries that have elapsed since his removal have amply illustrated the providential law, "Them that honour me I will honour." As contributing to a restored literature, Erasmus is remembered by a few : as having been the great instrument of reviving religion, Luther is remembered by all to whom religious truth and purity are dear. Erasmus sought to win the favour of both parties, by attacking the opponents of each ; and eventually he lost the esteem and confidence of all.

Before the year ended, Luther addressed conciliatory letters to some of his opponents, and, among them, to Henry VIII. of England. To him he said, "I teach nothing else but faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who for us suffered, and was raised up, that he might accomplish our salvation, as the Gospels and apostolical Epistles testify. For this is the head and foundation of my doctrine, on which I afterward proceed to build, teaching charity to our neighbour, obedience to the civil magistrate, and the crucifixion of the body of sin, as it is prescribed by Christian doctrine." Luther, in fact, had lost none of his zeal by becoming a family man. To the work that Providence had opened before him he was as ardently devoted as ever, and as plainly as ever did the blessing of God rest on his labours.

## CHAPTER XVI.

DUKE JOHN of Saxony having succeeded to the electorate, gave his warm adherence to the cause of the Reformation. During the life-time of his elder brother, he had held much intercourse with the heads of the Lutheran party; and profiting by their instructions, as well as by the example of his more aged relation, he was no sooner elevated to the supreme power, than he resolved to employ all his influence in upholding and carrying on the work of purification in the national church. To this end he issued a commission, appointing Luther, Melancthon, Justus Jonas, and the chief of the Wittenberg divines, together with certain eminent civilians, to visit and inquire into the state of the religious institutions of the country. The consequences of this visitation, which the reformers had long sought to bring about, were, to the people at large, among the most sensibly beneficial effects of the new order of things. The permanent stipends of the clergy being reduced nearly to a common level, while the burden of tithes was mitigated, and all those subsidiary emoluments resolutely cut away, which, consisting principally of fees for confession, and other illegal offices, had borne heavily upon the poorer classes, a searching reform through all the details of the administration of religion was carried into effect. Another and no less advantageous alteration was the breaking up of the monastic fraternities, and the appropriation of a small part of their ample funds to the uses of a system of popular education, which, however, had the

grave faults of being neither well digested, nor sufficiently extensive. Notwithstanding the general desire of the elector John to tread in the footsteps of his brother, and especially to follow up those measures of correction which the latter had contemplated, he was unfortunately wanting in the moderation, forethought, and resolution which so admirably characterized that sovereign. Without the firmness and ability necessary to withstand the arts by which not a few of the privileged rank sought to enrich themselves at the expense of the public interest, he suffered a large proportion of the lands and property of the monasteries to pass into the hands of the nobility ; a change which, though it did not entirely neutralize the relief afforded to the inferior population of the country, by the diminution of the church's demands, and the distribution of her treasure, was in itself equally inequitable and impolitic. A considerable amount was thus added to the revenues of an aristocracy already deeply guilty of oppression, which in strict justice ought to have been applied to ameliorate the moral and social condition of the people. It is true, that to some considerable extent the peasantry were indirectly benefited by the transition, inasmuch as the augmented resources of their lords enabled them to dispense with several of the severest imposts of past years ; but, while the too prevalent exhaustion and sordid poverty of the labouring masses should have commanded far more ample and immediate redress than they received, it may be doubted whether, in any event, the barons would have been the proper depositaries of any surplus of wealth confiscated to the state.

But if, in this arrangement, the new elector betray-

ed a conspicuous defect of energy and just determination, he was frequently in danger of erring on the opposite score of impetuosity, and of obstinate adherence to his own opinions, which sometimes bordered on illiberality, and even perverseness. In his eagerness to be rid of all traces of the ancient superstition, he would have prohibited, under rigid penalties, the celebration of the mass within the precincts of the electorate, had not Luther interposed to dissuade him from thus bringing the odium of persecution on the very infancy of a faith which, reposing on the word of God, and asserting the universal responsibility of man, maintained a coextensive liberty of conscience. Even to the expostulations of the man who had been the first to lay bare the rottenness and various imposture of the Church of Rome he would yield no further than to grant a reluctant toleration to the private performance of the ceremony. The same infirmities were again manifested in the premature formation of a league for mutual defence with the landgrave of Hesse ; who having, like himself, zealously adopted the principles of the reformers, would have needed little prompting to attempt to propagate them by the sword. Against that compact the Lutheran divines raised their united voice, admonishing the contractors as well of the probability of their alliance being construed by the Papal minions of the imperial court into a species of challenge to still more hostile activity, as of the utter faithlessness it disclosed in that providential wisdom which had so remarkably shielded the Reformation from the perils that hung upon its birth. In addition to these warnings, they deprecated the idea of resorting to secular force for the defence of religious opinions ; and insist-

ed that an appeal to arms would, under any combination of circumstances, be alike inexpedient and unjustifiable. It will be thought by many, that, in this instance, the remonstrants carried their aversion to the use of the carnal weapon in protection of moral truth greatly too far. But if the abstract notions implied in their protest involved rather too much of passive submission to be in harmony with the modern theory of human rights, there can at least be no question that, in regard to the particular case to which their observations pointed, if they were wrong at all, their error lay on the safer side, and evinced more fully the strength of their religious principles. As to the two princes, they took small heed of the objections of their spiritual counsellors. Stimulated by the hostile example of their mutual relation, George of Saxony, whose inveteracy against the reformers age only served to whet, they lost no time in binding themselves by treaty to assist one another in protecting the independence of their respective territories, and the supposed interests of their common faith. The ostensible object of this treaty was no doubt commendable; but neither can it be denied that the needless temerity and preparation for assault which it discovered had precisely the effect which Luther and his coadvisers had foreseen. It was a contract which, by its anticipative provision against contingent dangers, awoke the jealous forecast of the Romish faction, and invited the onslaught which it proposed to avert. True, the time came, and that at no great distance from the date of this precocious league, when there remained no alternative for the Protestant rulers but that of uncompromising resistance to the mandates of the emperor and

the diet ; but whether the arrival of that crisis was not accelerated, while the means available for a successful opposition were in a proportional degree curtailed, by thus forestalling them, may be a question with those who look deeper than the surface for the final springs of every great historical movement.

In connection with this transaction, Philip of Hesse assumed for his own section of the Reformed Church the title of Evangelical ; a denomination of which no one was more ready than Luther himself to advise the general adoption by his adherents throughout Germany.

Shortly before these matters came into agitation, the pope, displeased with the inaction of the imperial Papists, and alarmed by the ambitious designs of Charles V. on northern Italy, had withdrawn his countenance from the emperor, and concluded a treaty of neutrality with his rival, Francis. The momentary successes of the French sovereign in the Milanese, and the approaching defection from the imperial interest of the Florentine republic, encouraged him to expect that by balancing the power of one monarch against the meditated invasions of the other, he should be able to maintain the attitude of an arbiter between them, and preserve the influence of the triple crown inviolate and supreme. In this hope, he endeavoured to negotiate a general peace ; but upon terms which, stipulating for the independence of the Italian provinces, were peremptorily rejected by the emperor. The refusal of Charles to accede to the proposed adjustment of this quarrel with the king of France was the signal for Florence to abandon the imperial standard, and subscribe the paction which Francis was then on the point of concluding with the pontiff. Thus de-

prived of his two most powerful allies, at a moment when the aspect of the war was anything but propitious, Charles V. had neither leisure nor inclination to run the hazard of attempting to coerce the increasing strength of the reformers. His continued absence from the scene of their proceedings was another circumstance in favour of the Evangelical party, as it not merely precluded him from personally intermeddling with their operations, but kept in abeyance a sanction which, had he been present in Germany, would have aggravated, to a formidable extent, the power of their opponents.

The calculations of the pontificate were, however, totally defeated by the capture of Francis at the battle of Pavia; a result as unexpected as it was decisive, and which at once raised the emperor to a position which entitled him to dictate, at his own pleasure, the conditions of pacification. It is not improbable that, after this event, Charles would have exerted himself vigorously to put down the Reformation, had he not cherished a vindictive remembrance of the pontiff's readiness to desert him, on the first occasion which the contest afforded of seeking to recover the ancient and effective predominance of the see of Rome. Irritated by what he, not unreasonably, deemed an act of dastardly perfidiousness, while, nevertheless, he had no wish to see the empire overrun with the Lutheran opinions, he was content simply to instruct the archduke Ferdinand to convene another assembly of the diet, for the purpose of once more considering how to accomplish a settlement, alike satisfactory and conclusive, of the religious disagreements which divided the judgment of the country. In obedience to this



direction, the archduke of Austria again convoked the diet to meet at Augsburg, in November, 1525. The meeting, however, was so thinly attended that, after having been formally opened, the session was adjourned to the following midsummer, to be then held at Spires.

When that period arrived, the success of the reformers' principles was more than ever apparent from the testimony of the Roman Catholic members of the diet, who, with bitter vexation, complained of the impossibility of carrying into effect the decree of Worms; and insisted that, since the pope had so long delayed to comply with the demand of a former senate, it was incumbent on the emperor to use the authority which rested in him as *suzerain* of the electoral fiefs, by calling together, on his own responsibility, a general council for the effectual arbitration of all theological dissensions. The open celebration in the dietary city of the Evangelical worship, and the bold reiteration by the confederate princes of Hesse and Saxony of complaints against the state of the Roman Church in Germany, did indeed excite some of the more violent clients of the Papacy to press for a reinforcement of the law pronounced upon the Lutherans in a previous year. But the archduke, aware of the relations presently subsisting between his imperial brother and the holy see, would not permit the assembly to disperse until they had recorded a resolution, inviting the emperor, within twelve months from the date of that sitting, to convene a council of theologians and prelates, in which he himself should preside; and empowering each of the Germanic states, in the mean time, to take such order in matters of religion as its rulers might approve; they

being held responsible to the future convocation for their exercise of the discretion so intrusted to them.

This resolution (which, being in the nature of a temporary and provisional decree, has, from that circumstance, been styled the *Interim*) was eminently adapted to promote the oncarriage of the Reformation. Besides suspending for an indefinite period the legal proscription which had long hung over the Evangelical doctrine, it revived a principle of national self-sovereignty, which, striking at the base of the pontifical usurpations, was certain, in the course of years, to grow in favour with the community at large, and gradually to undermine the structure of ecclesiastical despotism. Though often afterward suppressed, kept out of sight, and even sometimes expressly disavowed, by many of the princes, this principle was never again totally eradicated from the German mind. It was a point of union, around which, on every appropriate occasion, the common feeling of the empire was prone to gather. It arrayed the sentiment of patriotism on the side of the reforming champions; and, under-flowing all the schisms and distractions of a century, slowly, but steadily, swept out of the country the effective predominance of the Papal sceptre.

The year 1526 was remarkable for the providential facilities which it afforded for the promotion of the work which Luther had so much at heart; and he was neither unobservant of the opportunity, nor slow to avail himself of it. In the beginning of the year a treaty was signed at Madrid between Francis and Charles, greatly to the disadvantage of the royal captive. He bound himself, however, by a solemn oath to observe it; and was in consequence restored to liberty and his

kingdom. The power of Charles now became more than ever an object of apprehension to Clement, one of whose favourite schemes was the restoration to Italy of political independence. Negotiations were commenced, therefore, with the French king, which issued in the formation of a confederacy against the ambitious designs and threatening power of Charles. Of this alliance, Henry VIII. was declared "the protector;" and because the pope appeared as one of its members, it was denominated "the Holy League." By his apostolical authority, as it was termed, Clement absolved Francis from the obligation to observe the oath which he had taken to perform faithfully all to which he had consented in the treaty of Madrid. Francis, likewise, was willing to afford not only countenance, but aid, to the Protestant princes and cities of Germany in their dispute with the emperor. Thus, indirectly, but not very remotely, the head of the church was affording political support to the very cause which his adherents sought, by all ecclesiastical means, to annihilate.

Nor was the conduct of the pope less advantageous to the Protestants in another way. A modern historian has stated this very clearly; and has pointed out, at the same time, the important bearing of the whole upon the as yet infant Reformation:—"At the moment when the troops of Clement VII. marched into Upper Italy, the diet had met at Spires, in order to come to a definite resolution concerning the errors of the church. That the imperial party, that Ferdinand of Austria, who commanded in the emperor's place, and who himself entertained views on Milan, should feel any great interest in upholding the Papal power on the one side

the Alps, while they were vehemently attacked by that power on the other, would have been contrary to the nature of things. Whatever had been the former intentions or professions of the imperial court, all show of respect or amity was put an end to by the open war which had broken out between them. Never did the towns declare themselves more freely; never did the princes press more earnestly for redress of their grievances. The proposition was made to burn the books which contained the new ordinances, and to acknowledge no rule but the Holy Scriptures. Although there was some opposition, yet never was a more independent decision taken. Ferdinand signed a decree of the empire, in virtue of which the states were at liberty to guide themselves in matters of religion, as each could answer it to God and the emperor,—that is, to act according to his own judgment: a decision in which no reference whatever was made to the pope, and which may be regarded as the beginning of the real Reformation, the establishment of a new church in Germany. This decree was immediately adopted in Saxony, Hesse, and the neighbouring countries. The Protestant party thence gained an immense step,—it acquired a legal existence.”\*

The fear of the Turks, likewise, operated as a powerful diversion in favour of the Lutheran princes. For many years the empire had been threatened on its eastern frontier; and the provinces of that part of Europe had often been laid waste by hordes of Asiatic barbarians, then in little more than the prime of their ruthless power, and whose situation at Constantinople gave them ready access to the countries through which

\* Ranke's "History of the Popes," &c., vol. i, p. 106.

the Danube passed. This very year, Solyman II., in revenge for the maltreatment of his ambassadors by the king of Hungary at the advice of a priest, had invaded that kingdom, and defeated the forces of the monarch, at Mohacz: Lewis was himself slain in the fight, and twelve thousand of his troops perished with him. Solyman was now triumphant, and threatened to continue his westerly march, and to overrun Christendom. This was not the time, therefore, for the emperor to hazard a rupture with his powerful vassals. Disunited, it would not be possible for the empire to withstand its potent foe, when, even united, his prowess was so justly an object of dread.

In the midst of conjectures like these, the enlightened band at Wittenberg continued their labours without intermission, and with extending success. Luther very earnestly recommended that diligent attention should be paid to catechising, particularly requiring that the catechisms should contain the ten commandments, the creed, and the Lord's prayer. He was not content with the mere committal of the words to memory, but admonished the catechisers, whether in the church or in the house, that they should be careful, by suitable explanations and questionings, to acquaint the youthful mind with the truths presented for its instruction.

He likewise carefully pursued his Biblical studies, writing those Annotations on the prophetic books which were published the following year. And with all this was connected diligent and earnest preaching, in which it is plain that he sought to instruct his hearers in the truth of God, and to persuade them to a full evangelical submission to the will of God. Speaking of a collection of discourses, referred to the present

year, his principal biographer (Seckendorff) gives what seems to be a correct account of his preaching generally :—“ These sermons appear to have been, if not all, yet certainly the greater part of them, delivered extempore, and without much premeditation : both expressing the mind of the speaker, and adapted to win the attention of the hearer. Their style was plain, and often might be considered irregular and bold. But there is a great and admirable copiousness, and a thorough soundness of doctrine, fitting them for giving instruction in the mysteries of the faith, for amendment of manners, for consoling the afflicted, and for refuting and guarding against the errors of the day.” He well understood the connection between preaching the truth and salvation. Referring to such fanatics as Munzer, who wanted to separate the Spirit from the word, he says : “ God was able to divide the sea by the wind alone, without the rod of Moses ; but he willed that it should be employed. So when the word of God is preached, and when the mind is smitten by this rod, God sends the Spirit ; but he sends it not without the word.” The pope he represents as consulting for souls by instituting pilgrimages, by the invocation of saints, by the publication of indulgences. “ In this way,” he says, “ does he seek to make Christians. He has done nothing at all. No one can thus be constrained to be a believer. He is not a Christian who is called in this manner, but whom God makes one. God causes the gospel to be preached in all congregations ; but to whom he gives his Spirit and another mind, him he makes a Christian. But now, all over the world, they seek to make men Christians by force and violence. ‘ If thou wilt not be made a Christian,

say they, 'we will burn thy house for thee.'" Seckendorff well observes that he condemned all violence, whether the persecuting compulsion of Rome, or the fanatical outbreaks of the rustics under Munzer. All this he thought was excited by the devil, to hinder the success of the gospel, and the fall of the Papacy. This was to be effected, he believed, in another way than by the destruction of monasteries and castles, even by the constant preaching of the truth, through which alone was it to be expected that God would illuminate the heart, and dispel the clouds that obscured the cause of righteousness and purity.

Thus, while all Christendom appeared to be both shadowed and agitated, this servant of God, unhesitating in his faith, pursued his way with a mingled serenity and earnestness, which proved that he well understood the reposing influence and prompting power of a genuine belief. Satisfied that his cause was the cause of God, he had no fears as to its issue; but, for the same reason, he allowed no shrinking from the path of duty, no trifling in its performance. Misgivings he had none: the whole force of his mighty and ardent spirit, therefore, was expended upon his work.

## CHAPTER XVII.

PERHAPS the next period of Luther's life, reckoning from the diet held at Spires in 1526, when the suspensive decree was passed which, according to Ranke, gave a *legal existence* to the Reformation, and extending to the diet likewise held at Spires in 1529, when it received the *name* by which it has since been distinguished, was one of the most important. The political events of this period were various and agitating; some of them most remarkable in their character, and all of them tending (as at this distant day, and with fuller knowledge of events, we are able to perceive) to the furtherance of the holy and benevolent cause with which Luther had connected and identified himself.

Most remarkable it is, that about this time commenced, on the part of our own eighth Henry, the indulgence of those doubts respecting the lawfulness of his marriage with his brother's widow, which have produced such permanent and important results. First of all, by the most Catholic of all Catholic courts, the court of Spain, had this question been started, affecting as it did the legitimacy of Mary, who was then contemplated as the bride of a Spanish prince. Henry, very likely, entertained these doubts because of the promise which they seemed to give of liberty for the indulgence of his own passions; but they certainly presented a grave question of law, which might be discussed irrespectively of the motives which impelled the mind of the king. The pope was placed in a most pitiable position. If he decided against the validity of



the scruple, Henry was offended; if in its favour, Charles. In the one case, his English, in the other his German, influence was threatened. The more remote position of England appears at last to have decided the movements of the holy and infallible see. Charles was a near neighbour, closely connected with Italian affairs, both as emperor and as king of Spain; Henry lived at a distance, and his influence on continental affairs was less immediate. He decided for Charles. Germany was not regained; but England was lost.

The Turks, too, pressed hard upon the empire, disunited as it was by religious differences. In fact, the power of Charles was far greater in appearance than in reality. His empire, though so widely extended, was not at all consolidated; and instead of the strength of one portion uniting to the strength of the rest, each, by its separateness, tended to hinder the efficacious acting of the rest; and thus, in politics, the mathematical axiom, "The whole is equal to all its parts," became not only inapplicable, but, if an index at all, an index by way of opposition and contrariety. The king of Spain and the emperor of Germany only united the disadvantages of each position; and the realization of the full strength of either, separately, much less of both combined, proved, in fact, to be completely impossible.

If anything connected with war, and its inseparably concomitant miseries, could be ludicrous, the farce of religious attachment to the Papacy, and its farrago of Catholic verities and usages, played by the emperor, in the year 1527, would be ludicrous indeed. Injured by his sovereign, the king of France, the constable Bourbon had deserted his cause; and, won by the promises

of Charles, (who always promised freely, because he appears not to have had one particle even of what men call *honour*, and which impels to an honourable performance of promise, in his whole constitution,) he had resolved to win for himself the nominal fitness for the sovereignty which seemed to be within his grasp, by some daring deed which should exalt his name to an equality with the high station to which he aspired. To some bold undertaking he was likewise impelled by the want of money to pay his troops, who had become discontented and threatening. In the spring of 1527 he resolved, therefore, upon marching directly to Rome, which, strong in the opinion of its own sanctity, apprehended no warlike invasion. Early in May, however, Bourbon, the Catholic, the representative of the Catholic king of Spain and emperor of Germany, appeared, in hostile demonstration, before the walls of pontifical Rome. Giving his troops no leisure for reflection, he soon led them to the attack. He himself was slain in mounting one of the scaling-ladders; but the assault was successful. Rome was taken, and sacked; and while the city was delivered to the unbridled passions of a ferocious soldiery, the pope, taking refuge in the castle of St. Angelo, was besieged there by the forces of his well-beloved son, the king of Spain, the emperor of Germany, the successor to the imperial crown of the Cesars.

This siege of Rome by the imperial forces, and the surrender, a few weeks after, of the pope, who had sought refuge from personal captivity in the supposed impregnable fortress of the city, placed, for a time, the destinies of Catholic Europe in the hands of Charles V. The general horror which attached to this sacri-

lege, while it caused the emperor to dissemble his satisfaction at the event, and barred him from appropriating all the political advantages on which he had counted, had the effect of establishing between him and the pontificate a mutual and permanent mistrust, which was not unpropitious to the reformers of the German empire. It was not, however, to be expected that the temporal princes who continued to acknowledge the authority of the triple crown would submit to a protracted restraint upon their ghostly sovereign and primate. After extorting from him a reluctant agreement to such conditions of prospective support as he could safely venture to impose, Charles therefore sought to conclude a peace with his consecrated prisoner. By way of smoothing the road to that consummation, and at the same time expiating his recent outrage on the church, in the person of its supreme lord and representative, he resolved to exert his whole domestic power to put down the innovating sect which had arisen in the imperial precincts. Accordingly, he again gave directions to the archduke of Austria for the holding of another diet, for the specific purpose of deliberating on the religious affairs of the country. An antecedent and most injudicious movement on the part of the impetuous landgrave of Hesse, and his contracted ally, the prince John of Saxony, had unfortunately served to excite among a majority of the electoral senators a feeling prejudicial to the cause which these two rulers had espoused. Yielding too ready credence to a report which had gone abroad of preparations being in progress on the part of some of the Papal confederates for an armed effort to suppress the advancing Reformation, Philip had called upon the

elector, in pursuance of their joint compact, to raise an army for the resistance of any such attempt. The rumour, however, proving to have been without foundation, the mere fact of the Evangelical princes having causelessly assumed a warlike attitude, could hardly fail to tell against the Lutheran interest in the diet. Nor was this the only circumstance tending to excite keener and fresh hostility to the reforming party. The emperor's late invasion of the individual liberty of the pontiff, an act unprecedented for canonical impiety, was deemed to have reflected on the loyalty of the Germanic Church a scandal which could only be removed by some equivalent and signal manifestation of subservience to the wishes of the popedom. Influenced by these considerations, the diet, under the vice-imperial direction of the archduke Ferdinand, rescinded the provisional decree which had passed during its last session, and, in spite of all that could be urged against so flagrant a contempt of justice, enacted that the proscriptive edict of 1521 should be rigidly enforced through all those districts which had been visited by the contagious spirit of ecclesiastical innovation.

Against this determination the sovereign princes, John of Saxony, Ernest and Francis, dukes of Brunswick-Lunenbergh, Wolfgang, of Anhalt, George, margrave of Brandenburg, and Philip, landgrave of Hesse-Homberg, subscribed and published a formal *protest*, which will be ever memorable in the history of the Christian world, as having bestowed upon the advocates of divine truth the distinctive title of PROTESTANTS; an appellation which, invested as it is with sacred and endearing memories, with a thousand associations of moral bravery and unconquerable truth.

illustrated by acts of matchless heroism, and baptized with the blood of saints, derives its noblest and immortal dignity from the mighty revolution it commemorates,—the LIBERATION OF THE HUMAN MIND FROM THE DOMINION OF ERROR, AND ITS CONSECRATION TO THE ACKNOWLEDGED SUPREMACY OF DIVINE TRUTH.

This protest, which appeared on the 19th of April, 1529, was succeeded, on the 26th of the same month, by a temperate but firm appeal from the decision of the diet to the emperor, in his double capacity of grand regulator of the secular concerns of the electoral fiefs, and president of the provincial councils of the church. It was not long before several of the free towns of Germany, including the great cities of Strasburg, Ulm, and Nuremberg, declared their adhesion to the principles avowed by the dissentient princes. Delegates were then chosen from the more prominent ranks of the reformers, to carry this appeal, along with the protestation upon which it built, to the presence of Charles himself. But before the two kindred documents reached him, the autocrat of Spain and Germany had made out his reconciliation with the pope, and bound himself to recover to the Roman see the estranged allegiance of his subjects, even if, by the failure of the ghostly weapons of the Papacy, he should be obliged to have recourse to the strong arm. When the deputies presented themselves before him at Placenza, he received them in a manner singularly ungracious; and with an air of offended haughtiness announced to them his entire approbation of the dietary act, and resolute intention to coerce the Protestants, should they still persist in their recusancy. The appeal to his own crown he affected to resent as a deliberate contempt of the juris

diction of the diet, and even ordered the bearers of that instrument into confinement. But these truculent demonstrations were probably designed rather to lull suspicion in the pontiff, as to the sincerity of his professed devotion to the service of the church, than to premonish a resort to those extreme severities which he menaced. After a detention of seventeen days, the Lutheran representatives, who had, meantime, reiterated their appeal to a free council, were again set at large.

The necessity of forming a new combination, on a more extended basis, was now more than ever pressed upon the reforming powers by the prompt and fiery prince of Hesse. Against that project, however, Luther and his brethren still persisted to remonstrate; alleging as one principal reason of their continued disapproval of the scheme, the disunion which obtained among the several members of the proposed confederacy, in regard to the substantive incorporation of Christ with the sacramental elements. To obviate this preliminary objection, the impatient landgrave set himself to bring about a conference between the Saxon and the Swiss theologians, in the hope that they might, by mutual concession, fix upon some common form of stating the disputed doctrine. The debate which ensued at Marpurg (October, 1529) ended, after a keen encounter of wits, and much laborious expenditure of scholastic learning, in each party retaining its own previous convictions. The main conduct of the strife lay with Zuinglius, Bucer, and Œcolampadius, on one side, and on the other, Luther, Eberhard, and Melancthon. At the outset of the discussion Œcolampadius dwelt with marked emphasis and skill upon the *unity*

of our Lord's body, which, he argued, having been carried to heaven after the resurrection, could not return to the earth, far less could it be present at the same instant in more places than one. To this reasoning Luther opposed the literal expression of the Saviour, "This *is* my body," and the equally distinct assertion of St. Paul, "I have received of the Lord;" passages which he averred to be neither ambiguous nor metaphorical. Bucer retorted that the answer was a mere *petitio principii*; and then arose a long interlocutory pleading on the terms of the dispute, and the exact shape of the issue to be raised. It strikes us as a thing to be noted, that throughout the controversy none of the Swiss party should have pointedly alluded to the very obvious fact, (a fact which at once defeats Luther's proposition, and is indeed decisive of the question,) that at the very moment when the words instituting the eucharist were uttered, Christ was still visibly present in his corporeal humanity before the assembled disciples. Those words, so confidently relied upon by the German divine, were actually spoken by the bodily organs of the Redeemer, so that in their *literal* import they could not possibly be true. It was not the bread, nor the cup, which spoke. The fragment of food held in the hand could neither be the body of which that hand so holding was a member, nor in any way suffused, imbued, or *consubstantiated* with that body. Nor could the wine then shining in the chalice be the blood which was at the same time flowing through the arterial channels, and pervading the physical structure, of the speaker. The affirmation and the command were enunciated by a *human* being, clothed with material flesh; and unless the con-

stituent molecules of that flesh are taken to have been exempted from the law which, inhering in *all* matter, precludes the multiple existence of the same identical atoms, it is necessarily *impossible* to attach any other than a figurative meaning to the language used by our Lord, in ordaining the paschal sacrament. Let it be observed, too, that the absolute *materiality* of the corporal substance of the *man*, Christ Jesus, is of essential and profound importance to be held in view ; for without it, the veritable human being of the divine Mediator disappears ; and with the genuine humanity, perishes the fitness and the adequacy of his sacrifice. Some persons, who assuredly give no credence to the real presence, are, nevertheless, not inapt to lapse into an error nearly akin to it. There are men around us, men deficient neither in intelligence nor piety, who conceive of the *very body*, the organic system and exterior tegument of the manhood of the Messiah, as endowed with some inherent principle of immunity from the immutable conditions of all natural existence. But the supposition is pregnant with consequential danger to one of the most vital truths of Christianity. He who imagines for the physical shrine, in which the incarnate God lived on earth, and which died upon the cross, a native and peculiar property, excepting it from the ligations and the liabilities of our own flesh and blood, stumbles upon a fancy which, if it were true, would rob the common nature of man of the consecration and the glory it receives from having been worn by the resurgent, as by the suffering, Deity ; would deprive the faithful of their consolation, and defraud the universe of its hope.

While these grave subjects were in deliberation



among an ever-increasing body of his people, the emperor Charles V. was honoured by the pope with a solemn inauguration to the throne of the Cæsars ; a formality which the pressure of the times had postponed to an unusual distance from the period of his election. The ceremony was performed at Bologna, where the emperor remained, in constant and familiar intercourse with his holiness, for the space of a month after his installation. During that term of renewed confidence and friendship, Charles took occasion to urge upon the Catholic primate the propriety of summoning an ecclesiastical council ; as both Clement and his near predecessors in the apostolic seat had repeatedly promised. It was no part, however, of the immediate policy of the pontiff to make so critical a concession to the demand, which was fast becoming general, for a reform within the church. With his accustomed dexterity in evading disagreeable requirements, an art in which few of the crowned archpriests of Rome have excelled Clement VII., he contrived to divert his imperial conqueror from that suit ; pointing his attention to the eastern frontiers of the empire, threatened as they still were with a new irruption of the Turks, under their victorious sultan, Solyman ; and to the internal disaffections which, fomented by the virulent enthusiasm of a remnant of the Anabaptist demagogues, gave intimation of the too probable renewal of those disastrous revolts which had before desolated various districts of Germany.

Nor was it without abundant show of reason that the emperor's thoughts were thus directed to the perilous and instant embarrassments which menaced his reign. Notwithstanding the recent and far-celebrated relief

of Vienna, and the immediate abandonment, by the Turkish armies, of the Austrian territory; Solyman, by his creature, John Zapolya, whom he had himself crowned at Buda, still held possession of nearly the whole kingdom of Hungary. Ferdinand, in terror for his own archducal diadem, began to wax urgent in his advocacy of toleration for the Lutherans, in the expectation, doubtless, of thus winning aid from some of the Evangelical magnates. Disturbances were rife in numerous parts of Flanders; while in more than one of the other great countries of the empire fresh troubles were to be hourly apprehended. Discord and mutinous dissatisfaction had become imminent in the imperial fiefs; and, in short, a general dislocation of the national union seemed to be impending. At this juncture, Charles returned from his long tour of conquest and ambition, to find the very heart and flower of the Germanic estates torn with intestine feuds, and seeming about to go to pieces, even while the lingering propinquity of a common and barbarous enemy pleaded for unanimity and energetic concert.

To devise prompt and efficacious remedies for a political condition so complex and inauspicious was no easy task. Fettered by his engagement with the pope, while the twofold dread of a civil war among the electoral estates, and of invasion from without, rendered the extreme alternative of that imprudent engagement difficult to be fulfilled; the emperor, on resuming in his own person the federal administration, had recourse once more to the deliberations of the diet. The venerable city of Augsburg was nominated for the scene of those consultations which were to be decisive both of the fate of the Reformation, and the

future integrity of the combined principalities. Thither the grave urgency of the topics to be considered, and the attraction of the imperial presence, drew a much larger number of the senatorial lords than had attended any meeting of their body since the important session of Worms.

And well might the reformers themselves feel, even painfully, their dangerous position. Since the pillage of Rome by the imperial forces, and the captivity of the head of the church, Charles had become anxious to show himself not the less Catholic for having imprisoned the centre of Catholic unity. So far as his own ambitious plans were concerned, he did not fail to extract (so far as treaties could be said to extract) as much gain as possible from his advantageous circumstances; but he was at the same time willing to prove to the pope, at the expense of others, how decidedly and zealously religious he was. He insisted, in his conversations with the pope, on a council, hoping, no doubt, to regain some of the earlier imperial prerogatives over the Papacy; but he was willing that this council should be called, not so much for any serious reformation in the doctrine and discipline of the church, as for the extirpation of the Lutheran heresy. And as to the mode of extirpation, examples had been afforded which evinced that the Papal party had not forgotten the way to deal with heretics, or changed their principles since the days of John Huss and Jerome of Prague. In the Netherlands, where Charles was not so encumbered in his proceedings, the fires of persecution had been already kindled for the Lutherans. And in Bavaria, in 1527, a priest, named Leonard Cesar, had been burnt alive "for the Evangelical

doctrine," although powerful intercessions were made on his behalf. Luther was greatly distressed by this event, although he solemnly rejoiced before God for the unshaken constancy and holy triumph with which the martyr had closed his life. Leonard had taken the ground occupied by the reformers ; and when pressed to recant, that he might save his life, he refused, unless they would show that what he believed was contrary to the Scriptures. At the stake, he besought the people to pray for themselves, and for him, that with an unyielding faith he might die. The fire being kindled, with a clear voice, he exclaimed, " Lord Jesus, I am thine ; save me ;" and soon after expired.

But while Luther felt for the man, he had no fears for the cause. Indeed, in the whole character of the reformer nothing is more observable than the completeness of the persuasion which possessed his mind, that the cause in which he was engaged was the cause of truth, and therefore the cause of Christ. That Christ would maintain his own cause, in whatever mysteries his proceedings might be enveloped, he never appears to have for a moment doubted. All he desired was to be himself more devoted to the cause which he knew to be right, and to be enabled to defend and maintain it by methods suited to his own nature. Much of Luther's character appears in a letter which he wrote to a friend after the martyrdom of Leonard.

" O miserable Luther, so unlike Leonard ! I, a verbose preacher of the word ; he, a mighty doer of it. O that I were prepared, I will not say, with double, but even half his spirit, to conquer Satan, and surrender my life ! Blessed be God, who, among so many ministers, at least one glorious spectacle of his grace

nas shown to us, unworthy as we are. Pray for me, my brother Michael, that Christ may enable me to imitate our Leonard. Not only *king*, but *Cesar*, he was deservedly called; because he conquered him to whose power there is no equal here on earth. He was not only *priest*, but *high priest*, yea, and *true pope*, in that his own body he presented as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God. And very rightly was he called *Leonhard*, that is, *strength of a lion*; for so was he, bold and undaunted."

When Luther, at various times, expressed his strong conviction of the necessity of Christian courage and resolution, he did so from the perfect knowledge that he had of the spirit of Papacy, and its favourite methods of settling controversies. He well knew that hitherto nothing but the repeated concurrences of circumstances so remarkable as to exhibit the wonder-working providence of God had prevented the employment of the usual means of conviction and conversion employed by Rome. He well knew that the more sincere was the religion of his opponents, the more likely were they to have recourse to the most energetic measures. Assuming the absolute truth of their own system and the soul-destroying influence of heresy, seeming cruelty would in their sight be real mercy. The removal of the infected, refusing to submit to the sanatory process which might be prescribed, would be mercy to the rest. And as to employ these measures was considered as the duty of the church, so to lend the aid of secular force was alike considered the duty of the state. Subsequently, the Council of Trent made it the duty of rulers to employ their utmost power to cause "the true faith" to be received by

their subjects ; and the confiscations, banishments, and martyrdoms that followed, evinced the sense in which the profession of the faith according to the Tridentine Creed was understood.

And at the Diet of Augsburg did the Papal legate seek earnestly to induce the emperor to lose no time in checking the progress of Lutheranism, by employing at once, and with decision, the power which he possessed. Charles had promised the pope that he would lend all his might for the reduction of the Protestants, and he seemed to be earnestly bent on doing as he had said. As he journeyed through Italy into Germany, to preside at the approaching diet, he was accompanied by several members of the Roman court, and by them his resolution was sought to be sustained and confirmed. Whatever the suspicions of Luther might have been, so far as they related to the wishes and counsel of the Papal party, they could not exceed the fact as it then existed, and has since transpired. Professor Ranke distinctly states that “the legate who had been sent to accompany the emperor, Cardinal Campeggio, had conceived bold projects, perilous in the highest degree to Germany.”\* The professor describes what these projects were, first mentioning the source from which he has derived his information: “A memorial presented by him to the emperor, at the time of the Diet of Augsburg, and containing an exposition of these projects, is still extant. With regret and repugnance, but as a tribute to truth, I must say a few words on it.” His few words are these:—

“Cardinal Campeggio did not content himself with lamenting religious errors ; he commented more par-

\* History of the Popes, &c., vol. i, p. 3.

ticularly on their political consequences. He represented, that not only in the imperial cities was the authority and dignity of the nobility lowered by the Reformation; not only could no prince, ecclesiastical or even secular, any longer obtain due obedience; but the majesty of the emperor himself was disregarded. The question was, how was the evil to be met?

“The secret of the means he proposed was not very profound. Nothing was requisite, he thought, but that the emperor should conclude a treaty with the well-disposed princes; they should then proceed to work upon the recusants by promises or by threats. If they remained stubborn, what was to be done? The emperor had a right ‘*to extirpate this poisonous plant with fire and sword.*’ The main thing would be to confiscate their property, secular and ecclesiastical, in Germany, as well as in Hungary and Bohemia; *for against heretics this is lawful and right.* If the mastery over them were once obtained, *holy inquisitors were to be appointed to track out every remnant of them, and proceed against them by the same means as were used against the Moors in Spain.* Besides this, the University of Wittenberg was to be excommunicated; all those who studied there were to be declared unworthy the favour of pope or emperor; *the books of heretics to be burnt*; the monks who had quitted their convents to be sent back to them; and not a single schismatic to be tolerated at any court. But first a sweeping confiscation was necessary. ‘Even if your majesty,’ says the legate, ‘confines yourself to the leaders of the party, you may extract from them a large sum of money, which is indispensable to carry on the war against the Turks.’

“Such,” continues Professor Ranke, “is the tone of this project; such are its principles. How does every word breathe of oppression, carnage, and plunder! We cannot wonder that Germany expected the worst from an emperor arriving under such guidance, or that the Protestants took counsel among themselves as to the degree of resistance they might lawfully use.”\*

It was well that the emperor stood in fear of the Turks, to meet whom he required the united strength of the empire. Besides, both himself and his brother Ferdinand were deeply interested in the preservation of their Austrian dominions, which were chiefly threatened by these their formidable foes. In 1529, Solyman II. had marched as far as Vienna, to which city he had laid siege; and though he was obliged to raise it at the end of about five weeks, yet as he had access to the very centre of the Austrian territories by the whole line of the Danube, this was enough to show Charles the danger of exasperating the Protestant princes of Germany on the one side, when he had such an active and potent foe on the other. It was thus that the persecuting tendencies of the two brothers, though stimulated by ecclesiastical superstition and bigotry, were laid under efficient restraint, and time

\* History of the Popes, &c., vol. i, p. 113. This is Professor Ranke's foot-note:—“They ventured to call such a mere sketch, an instruction: ‘*Instructio data Cæsari a reverend<sup>mo</sup>. Campeggio in Dieta Augustana, 1530.*’ I found it in a Roman library, in the hand-writing of the time, and beyond all doubt authentic.” In his appendix (vol. iii, p. 52) he calls it, “that blood-thirsty scheme for the destruction of the Protestants;” and gives some extracts from it, in the original Italian, justifying his severe censure.



afforded for the "good seed" to strike its roots deeply, and to grow beyond the power of extirpation.

Luther, in the mean time, though anything but ignorant of his danger, was neither alarmed nor anxious. He had not merely studied the word of God with an honest mind, so as to arrive at a settled conviction of the truth of the doctrines which he had embraced, but "he knew," likewise, "in whom he had believed." The belief of the existence of Christ's kingdom in the earth was with him a settled principle; an element of his intellectual being. His view of the almighty Saviour and Sovereign, as having "prepared his throne in the heavens," so that "his kingdom ruleth over all," was so clear and distinct, that he was like the young man whose eyes "the Lord opened," so that "he saw, and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." And, as his faith was strong and settled, so was it strengthened by that spirit of earnest prayer which he continually cherished. Luther cannot be understood if viewed only as a reformer who wished to revive neglected or forgotten truth, and to bring men back to the simplicity and spirituality of primitive Christian worship: his faith, if the distinction may be made, rested not in the truths of religion, considered as doctrines to be apprehended by the intellect, though all his writings, and his care to instruct others both by catechising and preaching, show that he did not neglect thus to view them; there was nothing blind or enthusiastic in his faith; but, passing through the truths taught, he rested not till he arrived at the objects which they revealed, and there he found repose. He trusted in God; his mind was stayed upon God; and

hence came the peace which he enjoyed. His natural temper was anything rather than careless. Full of ardour and activity, it predisposed him both for self-confidence in prosperity, and anxiety in darkness and danger. But all this was counteracted by the views which he took of the presence and dominion of God. God, he knew, would maintain his own cause. While, therefore, without intermission, he employed all the means which he had reason to believe the nature and urgency of the cause demanded, the whole burden of his care he cast upon God ; always, and especially in every exigency, making his requests known unto God by prayer and supplication.

Under these circumstances, in March, 1530, the Diet of Augsburg was opened. Not ignorant of the wishes of their opponents, and of the agreement which the emperor had formed with the pope, the Protestant princes began to consult seriously on the measures by which the independence of their several administrations might best be secured. Luther, of course, was consulted ; but his Christian principles would not allow him to entertain the question of resistance to the head of the empire, till the necessity for doing so became invincible. Even Maimbourg acknowledges this, though plainly with the view of censuring more strongly the Smalcaldic League, which subsequently the Protestants were compelled to form. "Luther," he says, "conducted himself on this occasion in a manner worthy of a good man. He wrote to the princes to divert them from their purpose, telling them that the cause of religion was to be defended, not by the force of arms, but by sound arguments, by Christian patience, and by firm faith in the omnipotent God."

“At the same time,” proceeds the Jesuit, “he published a short tract, full of quotations from sacred Scripture, by which the soul might be comforted and supported under the afflictions and dangers of the present life. He likewise reduced to German metre the forty-sixth Psalm, ‘God is our refuge and strength,’ and had it set to music, that, during the continuance of the diet, it might be sung in all the Lutheran churches.”

It was thus that this true reformer sought to prepare for coming events. The princes who had embraced the doctrines of the Reformation were sovereign in their respective states, but yet so as to be subordinate to the whole empire, and its actual governor. As yet, therefore, Luther believed that as their sovereignty was not directly invaded, they had no right to set themselves in opposition to their acknowledged chief. He saw the gathering storm, but for this he well knew how to provide. There is something noble and animating in the idea of the multitudes who had received the clearer expositions of divine truth, many of whom experienced the blessings which were set before them, joining, whenever they met together for the worship of God, in this acknowledgment of their dependance on him, this renewed expression of their devoted trust. When from these congregations the voice of thanksgiving and confidence arose, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed,”—the cry would come up to the Lord in his holy temple, and his eye would be fixed on the cause thus humbly and earnestly commended to his notice.

In the deliberations of the diet, the schism then

dividing the churches of Germany was allowed to have precedence of all other matters. The elector John, warned by a previous message from the emperor of the displeasure which his adherence to the Protestant secession and armed league with the landgrave of Hesse had provoked, took the precaution to prevent Luther from being present at the dietary sitting, apprehensive that the boldness of his tone and bearing might only serve to irritate the haughty temper of the German monarch. At the same period he provided himself with a written statement, which had some months before been compiled by the reformer, with the assistance of Pomeranus, Justus Jonas, and others, comprising, under seventeen heads, the substance of the Evangelical tenets, in relation both to faith and discipline. This statement, usually known under the name of "the Articles of Torgau," from the place whence it was dated, furnished the basis of that enlarged exposition which Melancthon, a few weeks later, prepared; and which, having been strongly approved by Luther, was submitted to the diet as a "confession" of the reformed doctrine. The emperor's communication to the elector also required a private conference to be had between them, prior to the opening of the federal legislature; but from complying with this mandate the Saxon ruler excused himself, on the plea, that such an interview would awake jealousy in the rest of the great vassals. Notice was then conveyed to him, that the Protestant ministers would not be suffered to perform divine service in any of the churches of Augsburg, pending the sittings of the diet. Against the last prohibition, the reformed princes, by the concurrent advice of their divines, united in petitioning the imperial throne.

Charles, however, was inexorable ; and the counsel of Luther prevailed to hold the Evangelical preachers silent during the continuance of the session.

On the 25th of June, 1530, the CONFESSIO OF AUGSBURG was publicly read before the diet. The original subscribers to that reverend document were the cities of Reutlingen and Nuremberg, together with the six princes who had signed the protest of the preceding year. The "serene" assembly heard it, says Mosheim, "with the deepest attention and recollection of mind. It confirmed some in the principles they had embraced, and surprised others ; while many, who before this time had little or no idea of the religious sentiments of Luther, were now not only convinced of their innocence, but were, moreover, delighted with their simplicity and purity." "By the grace of God," exclaimed Pontanus, one of the Lutheran doctors, as he handed the Latin translation to the emperor's secretary, "this confession shall prevail, in spite of the gates of hell."

A similar record of their sentiments having been given in by Bucer, on behalf of the Swiss Protestants, some of the more violent abettors of the Papal faction recommended the immediate and forcible interposition of the emperor, to stop the progress of opinions so widely at variance with established usage and belief. But the prevalent feeling of the diet being favourable to the adoption of a more lenient course, the Romish theologians were instructed to draw up a refutation of the articles included in the two Evangelical memorials, taking special care to avoid the use of all offensive expressions. Beyond this limitation the forbearance of the emperor could not be brought to extend. Faber,

archbishop of Vienna, having of his own accord undertaken to demolish the Swiss confession, the business of constructing a formal examination and disproof of the Lutheran declaration devolved on Eck, the old and fierce vituperator of its authors, and his worthy colleague the notorious Cochlæus. "Doctor," inquired the duke of Bavaria, a stanch and keen Papist, addressing the former, "can you confute that paper out of the Bible?" "No," replied the unhesitating churchman; "*to rebut those statements by Scripture is impossible; but it may easily be done from the fathers:*" a speech which aptly imbodyes the uniform rule and secret of the pontifical divinity.

The instrument composed upon this notable admission, and which assumed to be a confutation of the reformer's manifesto, is justly described by Melancthon, in a letter to his friend and leader, as "puerile" and "most foolish." Such, however, was not the judgment of the emperor concerning it; for, after causing the voluminous replication to be read at full length in the diet, he expressed his entire assent to the principles it set forth, and signified his sovereign pleasure that the princes who had heretofore sanctioned the Reformation, should forthwith conform their opinions and their worship to the general practice of the empire. To these announcements was added a monitory hint, that, as defender of the Germanic Church, he would no longer tolerate the Lutheran schism.

So favourable an impression had, however, been produced on some of the Roman Catholic members of the diet, by the moderation and ostensible rectitude of the opinions developed in the Evangelical confessions, that they were desirous to prevent the execution of the

threat implied in the imperial speech, by effecting an accommodation between the hostile religionists. The project was indeed more benevolent than wise; but, with characteristic urbanity and kindness of disposition, Melancthon, on the part of his reforming brethren, consented to make a last and hopeless attempt to conciliate their adversaries. It was consequently arranged that a certain number of persons, from either party, should be named to discuss the differences which obtained between them. After conferring for several successive days, numerous explanations and concessions being made upon both sides, the deputies finally split, beyond all chance of agreement, on the questions of justification, and of ecclesiastical abuses. On these points, into which the whole controversy between the Popish and reformed religions may in fact be summarily resolved, the division was peremptory and definitive. A second conference, in which the disputants were limited to six of each party, had a similar issue: and the Protestant delegates, reassured of the utter futility of all further endeavours to propitiate the clients of the Papacy, once more demanded that the two capital subjects of contention should be referred to the adjudication of a council.

Apprized of the result of these discussions, the emperor, in angry terms, intimated his dissatisfaction with their conduct to the Lutheran electors, and imperatively demanded their immediate submission to the see of Rome, and the precise forms of worship established in the empire. On the 22d of September the diet promulgated a species of provisional enactment, termed a *recess*; granting a space of five months to the German Evangelicals for conforming to the impe-

rial ritual; and requiring them, meantime, to be active in extirpating the errors of the Anabaptists and of Zuinglius. The latter clause, we suspect, had its rise in the politic wish of the emperor to save himself both the trouble and the danger of a forcible intervention, by arraying one section of the reformers against another, and thus driving all of them to seek, by the offer of renewed fealty, to strengthen themselves by the support of the pontificate. If such were really his motives, they show indeed a want of generous sympathy, and a wretched misapprehension of the influences which actuated the parents of the Reformation. That for the moment he really did entertain some such delusive expectation, we are the more convinced by the fact of his having shortly after (when time enough had passed to open his eyes to the mistake) procured another and far more severe edict to be promulgated; which, though it repeated his promise to intercede with the pope for the convocation of a council, revived the infamous decree of Worms, and denounced vengeance on those states and cities whose allegiance should continue to be withdrawn from the visible head of the church.

That which encouraged Luther in the midst of such trials and threatening calamities, was the conviction, which all his observations strengthened, that what he knew to be the "work of God" was prospering and extending. In a letter written to the elector of Saxony, on the 22d of May, 1530, he speaks of the youth of the electorate as growing up well instructed in the catechism, and in the word of God. "It gives me great and singular pleasure," he says, "when I see that boys and girls can now understand and speak better concerning God and Christ, than formerly could



have been done by the colleges, monasteries, and schools of the Papacy, or than they can do even yet.’

“There is thus,” he continues, “planted in your highness’s dominions a very pleasant paradise, to which there is nothing similar in the whole world. And by planting this paradise, God most evidently demonstrates his mercy and favour to your highness. It is as though he should say, ‘Most beloved Prince John, I commend these children to thee, as my most precious treasure: they are my celestial paradise of pleasant plants. Be thou a father to them. I place them under thy protection and rule, and honour thee, by making thee the president and patron of this heavenly garden.’”

In the course of the diet, Melancthon had written to him a letter full of fears for the cause in which they were engaged. Luther, in reply, reproves him for his unbelief, and expresses the ground of his own confidence. “If it be false,” he writes, “that God has given his Son for us, then the devil, or whoever you please, may be said to be in my place; but if it be true, what need is there of our care and solicitude, our sadness and trepidation? As though He who gave us his Son, would not help us in these lighter matters; or as though the devil were stronger than He. In private griefs and struggles thou art stronger than I; but in public difficulties the strength is mine. On the contrary, such thou art in public, as I am in private; if that should be called private which occurs between Satan and me. Thou fearest nothing for thyself; thou fearest all for the public: while I, for the public cause, am quite at ease, because I know it to be the just and true cause of Christ and God. I am therefore a quiet

and secure spectator. If we are ruined, Christ will be ruined with us ; Christ the ruler of the world. And let it be so. BETTER SINK WITH CHRIST THAN REIGN WITH CESAR. I beseech thee by Christ, that thou neglect not those promises and consolations of which the Psalms and Evangelists are full. Cast thy care upon God ; wait upon the Lord ; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. ‘Be of good cheer,’ said Christ, ‘I have overcome the world.’ If the world be conquered, shall we fear it as though it were victor ? This is not good : I know it is weakness of faith. Let us pray, with the apostles, ‘Lord, increase our faith !’”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE final decree of the Diet of Augsburg, which was not agreed to until after most of the Evangelical members had quitted the city, at once broke down the last remnant of unwillingness on the part of the reformers to arm for the defence of the truth, and of their own most sacred rights. Even Luther himself, deeply as he had hitherto protested against all anticipative preparations for withstanding persecution by force, now gave his approbation to the immediate adjustment between the Protestant states of a plan for mutual protection against the threatened invasion of their religious liberty. In the spring of the following year he published two works, asserting, in strong phrase, that to resist attacks, such as were indicated by the recent edict, was a solemn and imperative duty, which the reformed sovereigns would not be true to themselves or to their country if they failed to discharge. The lawyers of Saxony, almost to a man, did themselves honour by declaring that the emperor, besides threatening an infringement of the independence and internal freedom of the several estates which acknowledged the Protestant religion, had usurped a jurisdiction in things purely ecclesiastical, which was foreign to the federal constitution.

Scarcely was the decree issued, when the landgrave of Hesse, with the impetuous promptitude which distinguished all his movements, entered into a defensive alliance with the imperial city of Strasburg, and the cantons of Basle and Zurich. Only three or four

months elapsed before, at the instigation of the same prince, a meeting of the Evangelical rulers took place ; in which, after mature deliberation, the basis of an armed confederacy was provisionally adjusted. An adjourned consultation, held in June, 1531, at Frankfort-sur-Maine, was shortly succeeded by the definitive conclusion of the treaty, which is known to history under the title of the League of Smalcalde. This famous paction bound the subscribing powers to maintain, each of them, for the space of six years, a military force, ready, in the event of any aggression on the part of the emperor, to afford assistance to the particular principality or town which might happen to become the scene of attempted violence. The princes, at the same time, put forth a manifesto, embracing a statement of their demands in regard to the convening of a general and free council, and the effectual purgation of the Imperial Church ; accompanied with a calm but resolute denial of the authority of the emperor in matters of religion, and an exposition of the purpose and the grounds of their mutual compact.

It was not without alarm that Charles contemplated these ominous proceedings. In the vain assurance that the reformers were to be subdued by terror, he had committed the grand blunder of stretching his power too far. Nor could a more inauspicious moment for such an error have been chosen. With the remembrance of defeat, captivity, and ungenerous treatment still sore upon him, Francis I. watched with an evil eye the accumulation of those difficulties which were gathering thick around his rival and recent oppressor. Waiting only for a favourable opportunity to attack the empire, with a strength increased propor-

tionably to his vindictive sense of injury and humiliation, the French king had contracted an alliance with Henry VIII. of England, which, under cover of a vague determination to preserve a balance of power in Europe, thinly disguised intentions hostile to the German autocrat.<sup>4</sup> With both of these monarchs the confederates of Smalcalde opened negotiations; soliciting their support in repelling those encroachments on their independence and constitutional prerogatives which the emperor proposed to attempt. The promises, eagerly given, of aid from the two kings, and the consequent existence, in the centre of his own territory, of a numerous and banded interest, which, formidable in itself, was doubly to be dreaded from its connection with his most potent enemies, were circumstances well adapted to fill Charles with apprehension and dismay. The alienation of so large a body of his subjects, headed by the ablest princes of the land, he could not but regard with serious disquietude. Occurring, as it did, at an hour when the continuance of the Turkish war, and the recollection of the past successes and indomitable energy of the sultan, afforded ample occasion both of embarrassment and misgiving, that alienation was an event which called for instant reparation. There were other motives, likewise, operating to impress on the imperial mind the necessity of promptly recovering the good-will which his own imprudence and imperious folly had estranged. Charles at this time was bent on securing to his own family the succession to his throne, by the elevation of his brother Ferdinand to the dignity of king of the Romans; a titular distinction conferred by the unanimous voice of the electors, which, by prescription, amounted to a

recognition of the future emperor. To accomplish this scheme, it was essential to win the consent of the princes of Brandenburg and Saxony, to whom the archduke was, in some measure, personally obnoxious; and who, having refused to vote for his election, were not likely to be moved from their express determination so long as the penal rigours lately denounced against the religious body they upheld should be suffered to remain in force.

Urged by these considerations, and not improbably reluctant, for other reasons, to provoke the perilous outburst of a religious war, Charles V. solicited the friendly intervention between himself and the subscribers to the treaty of Smalcalde, of the elector palatine and the archbishop of Mentz. Through their mediation a compromise was at length negotiated. On the 25th of July, 1531, the pacification of Nuremberg (as it has been termed) was signed, and ratified at a diet held at Ratisbon in the following month. By this agreement, the Protestants were left free to use their own ceremonial of devotion, and to profess the reformed doctrine, until the rule of faith should be absolutely settled either by a council assembled within six months, or by a diet of the empire, to be specially holden for that purpose. The conditions of this pacification stipulated for an immediate repeal, by the emperor, of the decrees of Worms and Augsburg; the reformers, for their part, agreeing to aid in the prosecution of the war against the Turks, and to confirm the archduke of Austria in possession of the Roman crown. To the pope this negotiation gave extreme dissatisfaction. It formed another in the interminable series of delays which was ever frustrating the execution of

those malignant designs which doomed Luther and his immortal fellow-labourers to destruction. It was, notwithstanding, far enough from providing full security for the safe on-going of the Reformation. It established only a hollow and momentary truce, not a substantial and enduring peace; but he is something worse than blind who does not see, in the perpetual emergence of such barriers to persecution, springing up, as they did, out of passions and combinations which had no overt or definable affinity to the cause, the presence and the overruling power of Him, who, holding the angels of his churches in his right hand, rebukes the malice that would injure them, even by the issues of its own deeds, and repeats in the arrangement of his providence the admonition recorded in his word, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." While the diet was sitting at Ratisbon, and the Nuremberg pacification was before the princes of the empire, news arrived that Solyman, at the head of three hundred thousand men, had invaded Hungary. Charles at once ratified the agreement; the Protestant and Catholic princes came forward with their troops, and the emperor, in August, 1531, marched to meet the invader with such an army, that the Turks withdrew at his approach, and retired again to Constantinople. Thus, seemingly at the moment of impending danger, did those circumstances occur which once more left the reformers free to prosecute their plans.

The elector John of Saxony did not long survive the conclusion of this temporary reconciliation. He died in August, 1531. His son and successor, John Frederic, though inferior in talent and prudential fore-

cast, was, nevertheless, not without a portion of the tranquil and fearless magnanimity of the uncle whose name, jointly with that of his father, he bore. With the ardour and zeal natural to his age, the young elector united also not a little of that penetration and political address which had honourably characterized the most eminent member of his family. Those qualities, so estimable in themselves, had their value much enhanced by the ripe and swift judgment which dictated their uses ; and which, coupled as it was with a certain prepared energy and readiness for action, set a stamp of more than common worth upon the whole character of the new sovereign. Raised virtually to the station of chief protector of the Protestant faith, he acquitted himself successfully and well. Neither unconscious of the responsibilities attached to his position, nor shrinking from their pressure, he bent the forces of a clear understanding and a vigorous will to the service of the noble cause which he was called to sustain and foster.

The youthful ruler had but shortly been settled on the throne of his ancestors, when it became evident, from the suspicious coldness of the imperial court, that Charles had no sincere care to observe the terms of his engagement with the Evangelical League. Bare toleration they enjoyed ; but it was rather from terror of the opposition which an active oppression was likely to arouse, than from any scrupulous or cordial regard for the pledged honour of the emperor. Numerous indications betrayed a desire to elude the strict fulfilment of the treaty of Nuremberg, if not by direct and tangible infringement of its articles, by so cold and stingy a compliance with the bare letter of their stipulations,



as inferred a willingness to seize the first occasion to annul them altogether. Awake to the significance of this heartless and reluctant amity, the elector omitted no exertion to draw close the bonds of friendship between the contracted princes, and to multiply their available resources, in case of need. By this show of timely precaution, Charles was again admonished of the impolicy of dealing perfidiously with the chieftains of a body which, by the year 1532, had spread itself over nearly half of the dependencies of the empire; he set himself in earnest, therefore, to wring from the pontiff the convocation of a council, without longer evasion or delay.

On the way to visit his Italian conquests, in the early part of 1533, the emperor sought a conference with the pope at Bologna, and urged his spiritual ally to yield at once to the wishes of all Catholic Europe, and put an end to the Lutheran secession, by summoning a general assembly of the Papal theologians and prelates. To have refused to act on a suggestion so powerfully recommended, and so precisely in unison with the known and universal anxiety of every Christian state, would have rekindled the anger of the German monarch; an anger which, having before smarted under its inflictions, the crafty and unheroical pontiff had learned to dread even more, perhaps, than he trembled to incur the general odium which such a refusal would have drawn upon him. He discovered, too, that Charles was not again to be diverted from his aim by any of those dexterous shifts which, in a former instance, had turned aside the pressure of the same proposition. Thus cut off from every pretext for further procrastination, while his attempted and sideways avoid-

ances of the demand were no longer suffered to avail, Clement professed a ready and even eager acquiescence, and affected to consult with his august suitor as to the best means of rendering the proposed council satisfactory as a tribunal to all parties interested, and of investing its decisions with practical and sufficient efficacy. Nothing, however, could be further from his real intentions than to comply with the imperial prayer. To elude the embarrassments incident to that solicitation, he resolved, with the aptitude of a life-long practice in duplicity, so to hamper the entire project, as indefinitely to postpone, if not finally to defeat, its execution. Under colour of endeavouring to adjust the preliminary arrangements requisite for the holding of an assembly which he never meant to convene, he offered to them certain bases for the constitution and appellate authority of the proposed council, to which, as was rightly foreseen, the objections on their side were various and insurmountable. With the very thought of such delusive negotiations leading to any kind of agreement between himself and the seceders from the Papacy all along absent from his heart, he contrived to protract the solemn farce, until, in September, 1534, death put a period to his hypocritical labours and nefarious ingenuity.

Luther, in the meanwhile, had been pursuing his usual course of studying, teaching, and preaching. His life, during these years, presents scarcely any incidents. His path of duty was very uniform, and he steadily pursued it. To the establishment of fundamental truth he appears chiefly to have devoted himself; while to his coadjutor and friend, Melancthon, he left, for the most part, the task of amplifying, guard-

ing, and of stating publicly, and with sufficient elegance and care, what he had himself, in the course of his studies, been enabled to perceive. Indeed, nothing is more remarkable, nothing more instructive, in the character of these two great men, than their unbroken friendship for each other, and their mutual subserviency and subordination. Their conjoint position in reference to the work of God cannot be attentively considered without the discovery of one of the most important of the laws of divine Providence. God has made man for dependance on himself, his Maker, and constant Preserver; he has made him, likewise, for such union with his fellows as always implies mutual dependance, and affectionate co-operation. No one man is able to do everything. If for one particular service his peculiar constitution eminently fits him, by that very peculiarity he may be unfitted for some other, and not less necessary, branch; which, that it may not be omitted, has to be performed by another person. And often does it occur that by the union of two, whose mental constitutions greatly differ, more may be done than the sum of their labours carried on separately would produce. Luther and Melancthon did more by labouring in conjunction, than Luther and Melancthon could have done by labouring separately; especially if each, in all that he did, had jealously kept in view the honour to be obtained by his own acknowledged superiority in his own providential department of labour. Luther could do what Melancthon could not do; Melancthon could do what Luther could not do. But more than this. Peculiar fitness may border on peculiar unfitness; and this, if not unchecked, may interfere materially with the efficiency even of the

efforts for which the individual is best prepared. That the public may have the full benefit of his providential endowments, it is necessary that they be stimulated to the point up to which their efficiency extends, and that they be checked just when that efficiency is about to become injurious. It is delightful to see these two devoted men so uniting as to harmonize with each other. Melancthon knew how to check what might have been the undue ardour of Luther; Luther knew how to excite the cautious timidity of Melancthon. Each was aware of his own deficiency, and each saw how well his own deficiency was met by the peculiar excellence of the other. Instead of an unhallowed rivalry between them, each delighted to exalt the other. Melancthon knew how to eulogize the holy resolution and boldness of Luther; Luther knew how to eulogize the cautious and examining timidity of Melancthon. Each knew what he could do, and what he could not do; and each was willing—was willing? was more than willing, was desirous—that what he could not do by himself, should be done by the assistance of his friend. And the reason was plain. Each looked at the cause of Christ, and not at his own honour. If the interests of religion were promoted, and Luther were the instrument, Melancthon rejoiced; if Melancthon were the instrument, Luther rejoiced. And let it be again observed, that thus was the sum of their labour greater than their separated endeavours could have produced. Luther's share would have had to be taken with the drawbacks occasioned by his peculiar defects; and so as to Melancthon. But labouring in affectionate union, each assisted to check the tendency to evil which existed in the other, and to re-

duce it to its lowest practical influence ; and the consequence was, that each furnished a larger share of usefulness than he could otherwise have contributed. More glory was brought to God ; more service was performed for the church. And why ? Because each delighted to honour the other, and to see the other honoured. Luther was always gratified to hear Melancthon praised, and to see Melancthon employed ; and so was Melancthon as to Luther. Instead of a jealous sensitiveness about his own fame, producing a foolish and sinful rivalry, each acknowledged the gifts of the other, and both were willing to employ them conjointly, for the honour of the Giver.

And this was according to the design of God. As man is, the talents of Luther and Melancthon could not have been united in one person. They were distributed, therefore, that the share of each might be more efficient. And when these two excellent men agreed to labour in harmony, they set an example of obedience to the Scriptural injunctions,—“ Look not every man on his own things, but every man, also, on the things of others:—in honour preferring one another ;”—which for clearness and power has never been surpassed, seldom equalled. And they were themselves benefited by this. Each was more useful by the aid of the other ; and thus each has a larger degree of honour than would have fallen to his share had he laboured alone, and sought to obscure his rival's fame, lest his own should be shaded. They crucified their own corrupt nature, and sought to have “ *that mind in them* which had been before in the Lord Jesus Christ.” They were fellow-helpers to the truth, where they might have been unholy rivals ; and as they thus

honoured God, God has honoured them. Each shines in his own distinguishing light; and yet by shining in conjunction, the light of each is increased.

The ardour of Luther in defence of what he regarded as the cardinal doctrine of divine revelation, passing years rather increased than diminished. Thus, in 1531, he wrote, "This article (namely, that faith without any work justifies before God) shall be overturned neither by emperor nor king; neither by Turk nor Tartar: the pope cannot subvert it; nor the whole body of cardinals, or bishops, or monks, or nuns. Princes and dynasties cannot put it down. No, nor all the world, even though all the devils should contribute their help. They who try to put it down shall have the infernal fire for the reward of their contradiction. Thus say I, Doctor Martin Luther, the Spirit of God moving me; and this is the true gospel of Christ."

This doctrine he goes on to prove by a simple yet very striking argument, and one which is very illustrative of his own peculiar mode of thinking. Quoting the Apostles' Creed, he says, "I believe in Jesus Christ, crucified, dead, and buried. I find not that any other died for sin, or can take it away. If, therefore, no other died for our sins, then all men, with all their works, are to be excluded from having any part in the remission of sins, and justification. Neither does Christ deliver from sin otherwise than as he is apprehended by faith, and this cannot be done by works. But if faith, before works follow, apprehends Christ, it is of necessity true that by faith alone we appropriate redemption to ourselves; in other words, by faith alone we are justified. After faith, indeed, good works follow as its fruit. This is our doctrine. Thus does the

Holy Spirit, thus does the whole Christian church, teach. In this, by the grace of God, we are resolved to persist. Amen."

His eulogy on the deceased elector is very characteristic. "I will not praise him," he says, "for his great virtues. I acknowledge that he was a sinner, as we all are, and that he had need of forgiveness of sin. Nor will I represent him as though he had been a man free from every spot. And yet he was one of the best and most humane of men, without any guile; in whom none could note either pride, or anger, or envy; who forgave most readily, and who carried his mildness and lenity to a fault. If sometimes in his government he erred, what wonder? princes are but men, and where private men have one devil about them, they have ten."

In the year 1532 he preached a sermon on expecting and desiring the coming of Christ. In this he expresses, in the most pathetic language, the grief that he felt for the prevailing wickedness of the age, and declares that his whole comfort was derived from the hope that a better state of things should one day be established. "O my God," he exclaimed, "were there not *that day* to be looked for, I should choose rather not to have been born." He refers to the opposition which the revived gospel continued to receive from its persecuting adversaries. He refers, likewise, to the evils which were too plainly evident even where a purer faith was professed. "Even among ourselves, we have to bear with false, fraudulent, and lying men. Where is discipline, honesty, reverence? Do men become always the worse for being preached to and reprov'd? Certainly it seems as if from our most beloved, our most precious gospel, we had hitherto gained

nothing but contempt, and ignominy, and diabolical hatred. These are the things that penetrate and tear the heart of true Christians. Why, therefore, do we not cry to the Lord day and night, that he would overturn all these things, and put an end to this impious state of things, and its calamities? Most miserable should we be, unless we were able to hope for deliverance."

No one who understands human nature will mistake the meaning of the holy reformer. He did not overlook the good that God had been pleased to effect by the instrumentality of himself and his fellow-labourers. He not only saw it, but rejoiced in it, and gave glory to God on account of it. But he saw that there were those who, while they professed to receive the truth, yielded not to its sanctifying power; while others had turned back to their crooked ways, and brought reproach on the cause which they had espoused. And he may be pardoned if, experiencing the saving operation of the truth of God himself, he felt a melancholy disappointment when he saw so many who had received the truth, but who proved, by their conduct, that their heart and conscience were not affected by it. He had looked at the power of God's word, and had hoped better things of men. His disappointment was bitter; but let not its object be mistaken. It was not that Evangelical truth had done nothing, but that it had not done all that he had desired and hoped. Others who have been employed in the great work of God, when any particular revival of it has been vouchsafed, have made similar complaints.

Paul III., on whom the sacred college next devolved the Roman primacy, displayed upon his first accession a less treacherous readiness to abate the corruptions



of the pontifical court, and concede to the general voice some of the principal reforms for which it clamoured. That he was thoroughly honest in his professions of anxiety for the immediate convention of a council is exceedingly dubious. But, whatever were his secret meditations on this head, there can be no question that the only form he contemplated of such a meeting was one which would have made it a mere instrument of the tyranny and hatreds of the Papal see. Composed as he prescribed that it should be composed, that meeting would have presented the anomalous spectacle, which in after-years was actually realized by the Council of Trent, of a deliberative body being at once witness and criminal, sitting in judgment on themselves. It would have been, in effect, neither more nor less than an organized machine to echo and record the foregone conclusions of the popedom, in regard as well to its own dogmas and internal polity, as to the alleged heresies of the reformers. That the jurisdiction of a court so constituted would never be acknowledged by the Evangelical teachers, Paul must have known, when he despatched Verger, an ecclesiastic of superior ability and high rank, into Germany, as legate extraordinary, to ascertain the exact construction of the council required by the Protestants, and the conditions upon which they would submit to be bound by its determinations. The truth is, that the single object which the pope sought to accomplish by calling this oft-promised assembly of divines, was to exterminate that revived purity and ennobling power of Christianity which had struck off the fetters of a base and outworn superstition, and given back to the defrauded spirit of mankind its native and immortal freedom.

In the whole eventful history of Luther, no individual occurrence more palpably illustrates the victory of religious truth than does the embassy of Verger. What a contrast is here presented to the insolent and haughty scorn which hung upon the outset of his career! How different the mission of this nuncio from those of Cajetan and Aleandro! In the short space of fifteen years, the feeble and obscure monk of Wittenberg, struggling with poverty, and thrice excommunicated,—the man cited like a felon before cardinals and princes,—is lifted to a moral eminence so conspicuous and commanding, so high above all hope of touching him, even with the fulminations of ecclesiastical wrath, that the supreme lord of the whole Christian world, he at whose feet monarchs bowed in homage, and who claimed to be God's vicegerent upon earth, is seen humbling himself so far before this despised and outcast rebel, as to send a prelate of distinction in the church to ascertain his present sentiments and purpose in relation to the grand tribunal of the assembled hierarchy! Such was the tacit confession of that substantial dignity, that real and holy elevation, which an unflinching advocacy of the pure word of God had bestowed upon the LIBERATOR OF THE HUMAN INTELLECT, AND THE TRANSLATOR OF THE BIBLE.

When the pope's nuncio arrived at Wittenberg, Luther willingly attended, and conversed with him on the subject of the intended council. "It is now," he said, "useless to hold a council: if you do so, no object of importance will be accomplished by it. Tonsures and robes, and trivial matters of that sort, will be discussed, instead of the great points of justification, faith, and Christian unity. In matters of doctrine, I, and those

who think with me, have no need of any light that a council could afford us. Our opinions are fixed: and the only use of a council would be to settle the belief of persons who are ignorant and weak enough to take their notions from other men. Nevertheless, if a council is to be really assembled, I will attend, even although I should know beforehand that it would surely send me to the flames."

"And where," asked the legate, "would you prefer this council to be held?"

"Anywhere you please," was the ready response of Luther. "Let it be at Petavia, Florence, or Mantua, or wherever else you choose: it is indifferent to me. In whatever place it may sit, I will be there." \* \* \* "Suppose," said Verger, "the pope should visit you at Wittenberg." "Let him come, by all means," answered the reformer. "But would you have him come alone, or with an army at his back?" "As he will," replied Luther: "in either case we shall be ready for him." \* \* \* As the speaker rose to depart, the nuncio, in a tone half-humorous and half-warning, added, "Do not forget, doctor, to be in readiness for the council." "Have no fear of that, my lord bishop," said the other: "depend upon it, I will be present at the council, though I know that it will be at the risk of my neck."

More than one interview afterward took place between Verger and the elector, accompanied by the prince of Hesse; but all their conferences came to nothing; and the council, though it continued during the remainder of Luther's lifetime to be always talked of, and was at last actually summoned, did not assemble at Trent until a few months after his death.

## CHAPTER XIX.

IT was pending the perfidious negotiations of Clement VII. relative to a council which he never intended to hold, that the pontificate received another and mortal blow from the abjuration of its authority by Henry VIII. in England. The annals of Europe supply, indeed, no more memorable example of the manner in which the divine Governor of the world, extracting good out of evil, causes even the baseness and the wrath of man to praise him, than appears in the consequences of an act prompted by the mere and desperate impatience of the most truculent tyrant that ever wielded the British sceptre. Exasperated at the delay and ultimate refusal of his suit for a dispensation from his conjugal vow to Catharine, aunt to Charles V., and aware that the true motive of that refusal was subservience to the wishes of his wife's imperial relation, the English despot had conceived a momentary lust of vengeance upon Charles, as the real and successful thwarter of his heartless designs. It became, accordingly, his eager policy to offer assistance and support to the Protestant confederates of the empire. Sympathy with the principles on which their union was founded Henry had none; nor care for that purity of Christian doctrine which they were sworn to preserve. His hope was only to find means, by connecting himself with the German reformers, to harass and wound the emperor; thus giving vent to the vindictive passion which harboured in his bosom.

The League of Smalcalde having, in the mean time,

been extended and renewed, the king of England despatched Fox, bishop of Hereford, attended by several other clergymen, as his ambassador, to propose to the contracted princes to accept of his alliance in the quality of protector of their covenant. To this proposal the consent of those princes was not hard to be obtained, upon the stipulation that their intended defender should promote the adoption, in his kingdom, of the sentiments imbodyed in the Confession of Augsburg. The British monarch would readily have agreed to the condition; but finding, as he very soon did find, that the Evangelical allies were resolute to limit the scope of their combination to measures purely defensive of their own freedom of conscience, and would engage in no conspiracy having for its object to embarrass and degrade the emperor, he broke off the treaty; and gradually, as a good understanding was restored between himself and Charles, ceased to take any further concern in the affairs of Lutheran Germany.

The negotiation, however, notwithstanding its proper business was thus totally defeated, had a collateral issue, which, unforeseen, and as little coveted, by its savage and proud inviter, has ever since proved eminently beneficial to the moral interests of his country. During the winter of 1536-7, Fox and his suite were detained at Wittenberg; where their daily intercourse and free discussion of religious questions with Luther and his learned associates aided greatly to enlighten and expand the views of the English divines. To this circumstance may partly be ascribed the singular clearness and rapidity with which the doctrines of the Reformation developed themselves in our own land. Their daily and familiar conversations, throughout

several months, with the first teachers of the restored and simple gospel, gave to the British envoys the advantage of starting, as theological instructors, from those advanced points of Christian knowledge to which the Saxon reformers had fought their way through years of discouragement and doubt, impeded as well by the long-lingering prejudices of education and habit in themselves, as by the force of ignorance, prescription, and authority, together with a thousand kindred hinderances, in others. In the well-known Concord of Wittenberg, which, about the same period, achieved a final reconciliation of the differences between the Lutheran and Swiss Protestants, we may also trace the pattern of those broad and comprehensive statements of the cardinal truths of Christianity which compose the established creed of the Church of England: statements as admirable for their lucid and precise expression of the *essential* points of faith, as for their scrupulous avoidance of all immaterial topics of dispute.

The restoration of harmony between the two sections of the Evangelical community was hailed by Luther with a heartfelt satisfaction. Retaining his peculiar opinions relative to the bodily admixture of Christ with the eucharist, he had not to learn that uniformity of credence among a multitude of men, taught to think for themselves, was neither to be rationally expected, nor made a pretext for holding back that fraternal charity which is the parent of the genuine oneness of the church. The fate of Zuinglius, who, since the date of the disputation at Marpurg, had fallen bravely fighting for the invaded rights of judgment in his countrymen, and the melancholy death of Œco-

lampadius, whom grief for the loss of his friend had brought to a premature grave, appear to have deeply touched the underflowing tenderness of Luther's nature. So keenly, indeed, were his sympathies aroused by these events, that, in spite of his former and emphatic protest against a confederation of parties who disagreed upon the sacramental question, he was among the first to approve of the Protestant towns of Switzerland being included in the second and more powerful alliance of Smalcalde.

After having received from various quarters many smaller accessions of force, that alliance was in 1538 amply strengthened by the adhesion of Christian III., king of Denmark. At the junction of this sovereign, in a compact already formidable, both from the number of its members and the military resources which some of them commanded, the Catholic potentates suddenly took alarm. Affecting to be apprehensive of some intended aggression by the associated Protestants, the princes of Brunswick and Bavaria united with Duke George of Saxony in effecting a new combination, with the emperor at its head, for the maintenance of the ancient religion in the Germanic estates. Under the name of the Holy Alliance, this counter-league was concluded at Nuremberg, within six months after the last extension of the Lutheran treaty; and thus were laid the primitive foundations of those mutually hostile arrayals of the two great classes of religionists, which, in the end, gave birth to struggles apparently destined to terminate only in the dismemberment of the empire.

Happily for that portion of the Saxon province which acknowledged his dominion, the following year saw

the duke George—an adversary to the Reformation, as pertinacious and remorseless as he was inconsistent—laid in the tomb of his fathers. His brother Henry, who inherited the ducal crown, was a being of different mould, an ardent lover both of the reformed doctrine and its advocates. With a considerate but not uncor-dial energy, he proceeded, as rapidly as circumstances would permit, to invert the entire policy of the preceding reign; and gradually to work those needful changes in the religious institutions of his principality, which, by an obstinate and perverse bigotry of the late sovereign, he had been deterred from using any effort to accomplish, though avowedly convinced of their necessity. Not content with a mere recognition of the Creed of Augsburg, he commenced a general and keen examination into the instant posture of the church; the application of its revenues derived from vested property; and the personal emoluments and moral character of the clergy. By suppressing monasteries, and prohibiting the mendicancy of the friars, as well as by filling the ranks of the parochial priesthood with pious and learned pastors, Henry, before the close of his short reign, had laid the groundwork of those broader and effectual meliorations which that ablest scion of the ducal house of Saxony, his son Maurice, lived to outcarry and confirm. By the decease of the prince George, the Protestants were doubly gainers. Not only was the adverse confederacy shorn of its most vigorous agent, but the power so lost to the Papists was, with all the increase which a better cause and a far abler organ could bestow, transferred to the opposite party. The archduke Ferdinand, enraged at the withdrawal from the Romanist interest of a strength



so considerable as was that of the Saxon dukedom, endeavoured to intimidate the lord of that district from pursuing the labour of ecclesiastical purgation; but, though far advanced in years, and beginning to bend under the weight of physical infirmity, Henry retained too much of the characteristic intrepidity of his race to be terrified from his purpose by the threats of the insolent Austrian. Regardless of those menaces, he proclaimed a solemn festival to be held at Leipsic, in 1539, at which, in the presence of his grand-nephew the elector, accompanied by the principal officers of the University of Wittenberg, the Evangelical faith was publicly acknowledged as the future religion of the state. At this great national sacrament, which finally established the unmixed oracles of revealed truth as the general standard of devotion and belief throughout the whole of his native province, Luther himself officiated. He whom God had gifted with the glorious distinction of unsealing the long-hidden covenant of human redemption, was thus additionally honoured to assist in the consecration of a sovereign and his subjects to that King of kings, and Saviour of all people, the records of whose mercy, and the declarations of whose will, he had been the first to restore to them.

After the return of Verger to Rome, the Protestant leaders had received notice to be in readiness to attend a council, to be convened at Mantua. Preparations were therefore made for laying before the assembled wisdom of the church a full exposition of the theological convictions of the reformers, along with a memorial embodying their demands for a reconstruction of the polity and ceremonial of the pontifical system, and a searching purification of the manners of the ecclesi-

astical body. The professed intention to hold such a meeting was, however, only one of the many and ingenious delusions by which the pope sought at once to amuse the German purists, and to ascertain the probable amount of their resolution and their force. The advisers of this scheme can hardly be supposed to have anticipated that the accused parties would consent to repair to the very centre of the arch accuser's peculiar dominions, there to take their trial before a tribunal composed of his own creatures, and presided over by himself. The electoral confederates of Smalcalde peremptorily refused to entertain the thought of submitting to so indecent an outrage on all forms of justice; and the project, consequently, like so many similar ones, came to nothing. The only effect of this proposed convention, was the compilation, by Luther, of another and elaborate series of articles, comprising a more ample vindication than had yet been produced of the doctrinal principles of the Reformation, and an equally full catalogue of those errors and corruptions in the Papacy which loudly called for prompt excision. These articles, which are composed with more than ordinary care, have since been enrolled among the standing records of the true creed of the Evangelical church in Germany.

But while the pontiff, by thus fighting off the long-expected correction of ecclesiastic abuses, was yearly widening a breach which had already become incurable, the position of the empire, imperilled by the continued predominance of the Turkish power in Hungary, and the ever-impending mutinies of the lower orders at home, drove the emperor to make another effort to accommodate matters between the German Papists

and their Lutheran opponents. For that purpose, having first appointed a preliminary conference to take place at Spires, he ordered the controverted points to be once more discussed, by certain divines, on either side, before himself, at the diet which was again about to sit at Ratisbon. When that diet met, some hope of mutual conciliation arose from the introduction of an anonymous publication, generally called the "First Interim," which assumed to assign certain practicable grounds of compromise. But this expectation soon proved itself to be abortive. After a laborious debate, conducted mainly by Melancthon, as counsel for the Protestants, and the Romanist advocate Eck, the impossibility of softening down the reciprocal opposition of the divided parties, and approximating to each other opinions which so radically differed, became manifest. Charles, in despair, abandoned the attempt, and referred the whole business to the adjudication of some future diet, or of the often-promised but still distant council.

But the increasing embarrassment of his political relations, rendered still more urgent by the recent failure of his expedition to Africa, and the danger of an immediate renewal of hostilities with France, compelled him, in the year 1544, again to bring the subject of the pending spiritual quarrel under the consideration of the dietary senate, at Spires. By this time a new element of difficulty was likely to emerge from a sharp difference which had lately obtained between the young duke Maurice of Saxony, and his cousin the elector. The former, disapproving of the policy pursued by the combined reformers, withdrew his adherence from the League of Smalcalde: and it seemed not improbable that the vehement irritation of his

princely relative would be productive of an open rupture between them. By the intervention of the landgrave of Hesse, such extremities, however, were fortunately averted; and the emperor saw himself reluctantly obliged to purchase the assistance of the great Protestant vassals, by granting to them the benefit of an absolute toleration and indemnity until either a general or provincial council should actually be convoked. It was then agreed, that at the reassembling of the diet, at Worms, in the commencement of the succeeding year, each of the dissentient bodies should submit a general project for the reorganization of the imperial church. But before that time arrived, Paul III., startled at the near prospect of a measure which, invading his dearest prerogative, would have taken the whole affair out of his hands, issued his circular letters commanding the grand congregation of the Papal hierarchy, to be held at Trent. Of this decisive proceeding, the king of the Romans availed himself, as a ground for recommending, in the name of his brother, that the question should be referred to the more appropriate tribunal which was about to be convened. That suggestion the Protestants, however, prudently rejected; not without some severe reclamations on the score of the emperor's faithlessness in seeking to evade the execution of a plan which, more than any other arrangement hitherto projected, promised to yield general satisfaction, and effectual redress. In truth, Charles had no other intention than indefinitely to stave off the Augæan task of purging the national church, until he should be in a condition, backed by the decisions of the coming council, to disarm the Evangelical confederacy, and put to flight the dream of a thorough ecclesi-

astical renovation. It is even said, that in an interview with the cardinal-legate Farnese, he announced his resolution shortly to take arms against the Lutherans : but that he had then absolutely made up his mind to venture on so critical a step is extremely doubtful. By way of amusing the reformers, while, in effect, he merely contrived to hold their too sanguine expectations in abeyance, he directed another of those useless conferences, of which too many had already occurred, to be holden at Ratisbon, in the month of January, 1546. The contending theologians again came together, and prolonged their unproductive disputations till the middle of the following March ; when they once more separated, hopeless of any future possibility of mutual agreement.

During these more public events, Luther himself was busily engaged in his usual employments. The only relaxation he allowed himself was that which the bosom of his own family afforded him, in the exercise and expression of those domestic affections which in him only glowed less ardently than his zeal for the continued triumphs of divine truth, and the continued and well-guarded prosperity of the cause of God. His own religious opinions had long ago become clear, systematic, consistent, and fixed ; and his great work now was to defend what he had embraced, and to establish and enforce the practical conclusions which opened before his own devoted spirit. The more he studied Holy Scripture, the stronger did his conviction become of the vast importance of TRUTH. Thus, in 1534, he writes : “ Because the Papists have the administration of the sacraments, and the seat of office, therefore do they claim to be the church of God

This is their strongest argument against us, by which they think we are to be completely overwhelmed. 'Can you reckon yourselves to be the church,' say they, 'you who are so few and small; while we are so many, and so great, and are placed in the chair of office?' We simply reply, 'If ye be ever so many, ever so great, if ye believe not in Christ, if ye confide not in his righteousness, we care nothing. Ye are not the church because ye have the office of the church; for it is written that even in the holy place the abomination of desolation may stand, and that antichrist shall have his seat in the temple of God. Therefore is the church to be shown from its faith in Christ, and not from its offices, or its multitude. This is the true touchstone, this the undeniably certain rule.'

He saw, too, as clearly as ever, that the grand argument against the Papacy was that which was derived from our free justification before God, for the alone merits of Christ, and by faith in his name. "By this one argument," he writes in the same year, "we overturn the Papacy. If Christ was wounded for our offences, then is the pope antichrist; for he teaches that we must, by various methods of satisfaction, make expiation for our sins."

Nor did he lose sight of the sanctifying tendency of divine truth. The enemies of the Reformation accused him of being a disturber of the public peace; but his indignant reply was, "At this day we are the conservators of kingdoms, republics, laws, and whatsoever good things are constituted by God. We who teach the word of God, retain and uphold them all. There are none who so adorn the magistracy, or domestic life, as we do. This our very opponents see, and are

compelled to acknowledge. And yet they call us disturbers, forsooth !”

Perhaps his greatest trial was one to which, sooner or later, all are exposed who are the honoured instruments of reviving religion by the faithful ministration of Scriptural truth, and especially of such truth as, notwithstanding its importance, has fallen into neglect, and even contemptuous denial. Such faithful ministrations will not be ineffectual. When the good seed is sown, good fruit will be produced. But there is an enemy who, when his plans of casting the truth into oblivion are broken up, will seek to bring it into disrepute by sowing his tares with the wheat. In some instances the truth will be embraced, so far as intellectual acknowledgment is concerned, but the heart will remain as worldly as ever, and the fruits of a worldly temper will be as plentiful as ever in the life : these fruits will be triumphantly exhibited by the opponents of reviving religion as the natural results of the preaching which they condemn. Nor is this the worst of the case. Enthusiasts and impostors will spring up, by whom the truth will be perverted ; it may be, most outrageously perverted ; and then these tares—for such they are, tares of the devil’s own sowing—will be seized on with avidity, and shown with even diabolical exultation as specimens of the entire system, which is to be judged accordingly. Ignorant men, weak in judgment, strong in passion, in every revival of religion, have appeared, disturbing and perverting the doctrines of the gospel, and eventually forming out of them a system in which corrupt nature luxuriates ; and some plot in the garden of the Lord is not only overspread with mildew and blight, but the place of

the fruits of righteousness is supplied, with fearful rapidity and disgusting rankness, with the "fruits of the flesh," often in their very worst form. Such there were in the churches under apostolic superintendence; and such had already afforded unholy exultation to the opponents of the infant Reformation. In the years 1533, 1534, and 1535, a more violent outbreak than ever filled the minds of Luther and his friends with grief, and gave to his enemies a plausible occasion of triumph of which they were not slow to avail themselves.

The conduct and fate of Thomas Munzer in 1525 have been already noticed. But though the mischiefs of which he was the ostensible occasion were checked, they still continued to exist. The scattered adherents of Munzer retired to various parts of Germany and Switzerland, and, though more covertly, scarcely less zealously, endeavoured to spread their opinions, and to gain disciples. Many were, no doubt, to a considerable extent sincere; but their principles were not the less mistaken, nor the tendency of their conduct less injurious. The Romanists have cast the blame of all their mistakes and excesses on the preaching of Luther. The very opposite statement would be the more correct. The preaching of Luther might be the proximate occasion of the *outbreak* of the evil; the cause of the evil itself is to be sought elsewhere.

The German peasants had been kept by their Italian ecclesiastical superiors in a state of the most deplorable and debasing ignorance. Not permitted to reason on religion, all was to be received with the most implicit faith; and their ignorance was regarded, not perhaps as the author, but as the best nurse, of their devotion.



And then these ignorant men were still men ; men with all the mental and corporeal activities of human nature ; men who were not only not exempt from the ordinary corruption of human nature, but in whom that very corruption had been allowed to grow up without the restraining influence of those real remedies which are provided in the gospel, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Nor must the fact be overlooked, that the Scriptures do most distinctly declare that Satan has a cause and kingdom in this world. Unhappily, a proud philosophy, chiefly fostered in these latter days by Socinian errors, has chosen to set itself against the admission of the fact, and to treat all allusions to it with a ridicule which shows that though they may not actually sit in the chair of the scorner themselves, they have learned to employ, and to take pleasure and pride in employing, the phrases of its occupants. But be their ridicule as keen as they choose to make it, to the believer in divine revelation it is plain that Satan has a cause opposed to the kingdom of Christ ; and that he is, with a ceaseless and subtle activity, so resolutely engaged in promoting it, that the employment of warlike terms is not only allowable, but even necessary, as furnishing the closest analogies for the adumbration of the confessedly mysterious subject. When, therefore, the beloved disciple had the visions of the future opened to his view, part of his description is given in the remarkable sentence, which, however (and unavoidably) obscure as to its particular application, is yet perfectly intelligible in its general significance, "AND THERE WAS WAR IN HEAVEN."

In perfect accordance with such analogies as are

thus suggested, are the terms employed in Scripture, which call on us, for instance, to put on the whole armour of God, that we may not only resist the devil, but overcome those malignant and subtle *methods* by which he seeks to circumvent us, and so to accomplish our ruin. And there is a well-known parable which represents the upspringing of the tares, the children of the wicked one, as following hard upon that of the wheat, the children of the kingdom; and which represents this as the work of the enemy. A revival of religion, therefore, may always look to be rapidly followed by a crop of tares.

Thus was it in Germany at the time the leading events of which are now to be described and explained. A chapter of ecclesiastical history is here opened which ought always to present the facts in connection with the principles of which they were the development, and with the important lessons which they teach.

When Luther began to preach as the truth is in Jesus, his doctrines were largely received in such love and obedience as soon exhibited their proper nature and character. But there were those who perverted and corrupted what they had heard, and who thus became the ready instruments of Satan for bringing reproach on the cause of reviving truth, and thus far impeding, if not altogether preventing, its progress.

In the earliest days of the Christian church, it is most evident, from the Epistles, that the two grand subjects, the perversion of which occasioned so much mischief, even when apostolic superintendence was exercised, were those of Christian liberty and divine inspiration. Ignorant and unregenerate men not receiving the truth in that humble submissiveness which,

issuing in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, would have led to the spiritual sanctification of their hearts and lives, received it for the purpose of gratifying their own pride, and their love of disputation, display, and fancied superiority. Indeed, they rather received the phrases intended to make known the truth, than the truth itself; and these they soon explained according to the unsubdued corruption of their nature, so as to render that corruption far more active and prolific than before. Hearing the words "*liberty*" and "*freedom*," they explained them to mean the right of doing as they pleased, and especially of casting away the fetters, as they would term them, of their civil and ecclesiastical leaders: and hearing of the "*inspiration of the Spirit*," they would refer to it all the thoughts and desires and purposes of their own minds when in a state of passionate excitement. Had we the minute details of the early history of the churches as implied, *necessarily implied*, in the epistolary statements of the New Testament, even the atrocities of the Munster Anabaptists would furnish no exception to the maxim of Solomon, "There is nothing new under the sun."

The occasions of these outbreaks of evil have already been indicated. They were the same which *the enemy* had employed in the days of the apostles. Luther preached on Christian liberty and divine inspiration, and there were men of ignorant minds, but of strong and easily-excited passions, who perverted these subjects, as had been done by those of whom Peter, and Jude, and our Lord, in his addresses to the Asiatic churches, complained. The followers of Munzer easily found disciples among the ignorant peasantry who sur-

rounded them; and when the progress of time had allowed the doctrines to take root, and become mature and fruitful, then did they quit their secrecy, and astonish and terrify society at large by the atrocious and daring conduct in which they indulged.

At Munster they had succeeded in gaining so many proselytes, that they now began to think of giving to their system a regular form of government. As yet they had not avowed their most dangerous doctrines, and therefore, for a time, even the senate and magistracy of the city were carried away by the torrent; and the opposing Catholic party were obliged to submit to a compromise by which a certain number of churches were given up to these sectaries. The peace that was thus restored was, however, as brief as it was unsound. Opportunity was given them for that self-indulgence which rapidly unfolded the real character of their principles; and that which might have been anticipated speedily took place. A man, not less ignorant than the rest, but more cunning; equally enthusiastic, and more perfectly free from all the restraints of humility and modesty; possessing violent passions, and concentrating all those passions so entirely on himself as to have no feeling of which self was not the object; in whom a vulgar and most perfectly-developed impudence supplied the place of courage, and sometimes even aped the appearances of magnanimity;—such a man soon came forward; and that he might himself assume the reins, and hold them with an iron hand, he began by promising a greater degree of liberty, and stimulating his followers to seize upon it. This man was the celebrated John of Leyden, a tailor, utterly uneducated, and who had heard the truths of

the gospel only to misunderstand and pervert them. Claiming a high degree of inspiration, he asserted the necessity of rebaptizing all who would obtain salvation, and made these assertions so as to excite the easily-moved minds of his disciples, who ran about the streets warning every one who would escape destruction to save himself by being baptized.\*

The next movement was one of violence. That full liberty might be enjoyed, the Anabaptists attacked the other inhabitants of the city, of which they soon obtained the possession. And now commenced the reign of the wildest fanaticism. John of Leyden had himself proclaimed king of all the earth, and sent forth emissaries to proclaim his dominion. He next abrogated the laws of marriage, pretending a revelation from heaven on the subject; and of his own teaching he immediately furnished the example, by marrying three wives. Further description is needless. Ferocity, licentiousness, and a daring impiety, under the garb of religion, domineered for months over this unhappy city.

In the mean time, the princes of Germany were not idle. The bishop of Munster, its temporal sovereign, had been expelled at an early stage of these dreadful proceedings. By him, aided by his brother rulers, the place was besieged; and though defended with great obstinacy, the fanatical monarch giving promise after promise of ultimate success, and thus animating his vassals by a religious enthusiasm, always burning furiously, and on which fresh supplies of inflammatory material were continually poured, yet the perseverance of the be-

\* Hence their name of Anabaptists. They are not to be confounded in any degree with the modern Baptists.

siegers at length prevailed. Even enthusiasm began to give way when the horrors of famine were experienced ; and the deluded multitude, sinking in death, unable, through physical weakness, to sustain the fury of their former enthusiasm, awoke from their dream, and saw themselves the victims of a vile and diabolical hypocrisy. John himself, however, securing supplies in his own palace, and knowing well the fate that awaited him should the city be taken, exerted his utmost vigilance ; stimulating the dying embers of enthusiasm, and using the power which had been given him as the depositary of the liberty of all his followers, so as to keep down the stirrings of discontent. It was the reign of terror. One of his queens, having expressed her sympathy with the suffering inhabitants, and doubted whether the luxuries of life should be enjoyed in the palace while the inhabitants were dying of hunger in the streets, was summoned before him, and her head was immediately struck from her shoulders. And thus were the genuine fruits of the self-willed enthusiasm of ignorance, passion, and pride, now fully disclosed in disorder and sensuality, in tyranny and blood. The city, however obstinately defended, was taken by storm on the 25th of June, 1535. John of Leyden fell alive into the hands of his captors ; and, according to the dreadful custom of the age, he was put to death by the most horrible forms of punishment. After other inflictions, the executioners tore his flesh piecemeal from his living body with red-hot pincers.

The period during which these excesses were committed in Munster was an exceedingly anxious one to Luther. Well did he know that his always watchful

adversaries would ascribe all these evils to his preaching. When the attack came, he was therefore prepared for it; and, as usual, stood boldly on his defence. Good-humouredly complaining of his unhappiness, that he could fully satisfy no one, he says, that the Papists regarded him as the very head of all the fanatics; while the fanatics proclaimed him to be no better than another pope. In one brief paragraph he places the question in its proper light, and disposes of it with a power which none could resist who were honest like himself. “Behold,” say they, “what fine things come out of this Lutheranism!” But they prove nothing by all their smart sayings. Did not the devils themselves proceed out of the society of holy angels, whom God created good? Sinners and sin have proceeded from Adam and Eve, who, before their fall, were truly to be reckoned good. Did not Judas go forth from among the disciples? And has not John said, ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us?’ Most manifest it is that heretics grow up among Christians, from whom they depart, and not among Gentiles and heathen people. And does not the Church of Rome claim to be considered as holy, though we Lutherans, whom she so heartily condemns, went out from her fellowship? Why, then, should there not be the same law for us as for her? And why should we not be reckoned, at all events, harmless, even though these Anabaptists went forth from among us?”

But while he thus met the objections of the Papists, he was careful to give full publicity to his opinion of the Munster fanatics, and their proceedings. “Luther,” says Sleidan, “among other things which he set forth in the vulgar tongue about this time, wrote

also of this tragedy of Munster: 'Albeit that for the contempt of the gospel, the reproach of God's holy name, and the shedding of innocent blood, Germany hath justly deserved to be plagued, yet hath God hitherto restrained the force and violence of Satan, and hath not permitted him to have the reins at liberty, but he mercifully admonisheth us, and by this tragedy of Munster, nothing at all artificial, calleth us to amendment of life. For unless God had bridled him and holden him back, I doubt not but that that most subtle fiend, and wily artificer, would have handled the matter far otherwise. But now that God hath made a restraint, he rageth and turmoileth, not so much as he would, but so much as he is permitted. For the wicked spirit, that seeketh the subversion of the Christian faith, goeth not this way to work, to persuade to the marriage of many wives. For seeing both the unlawfulness and the filthy beastliness of the thing, he perceiveth well enough that men would abhor it. Indeed, civil policy and government may be through this means disturbed; but the kingdom of Christ must be attempted through other means and engines. He that would circumvent and deceive men, may not affect rule and government, and play the tyrant; for all men disavow this, and see plainly what his intent is. He must attain thereto by secret means, and, as it were, by certain by-paths. To go in old and ill-favoured apparel, to look with a grave countenance, to hang down the head toward the ground, to fast, to handle no money, to abstain from eating flesh, to abhor matrimony, to eschew bearing office as a profane thing, to refuse government, and to profess a wonderful lowliness of mind, this, I say, is the ready way and means



to deceive even them that are right wise. But it is overmuch impudence for a man to take upon himself to be a king, and for his fleshly lust to marry as many wives as he fancieth: this, sure, is not the policy of any skilful devil, but of one that is rude and ignorant or, if he be expert, then God hath bound him so in a chain, that he cannot work more craftily. Wherefore, there is no great fear of this so ungodly a devil. I would to God that in the whole world there were no craftier devil than this of Munster. So that God would not take his word from us, I believe there are but few that would give any credit to so gross and so drunken a master. And yet, surely, when God's wrath is kindled, there is no error so absurd or unsavoury to which the devil cannot persuade, as we see happened in the doctrine of Mohammed; for, albeit, it is altogether foolish, yet the light of God's word being quenched, it took force and strength, and is spread abroad in such ample manner as you see. Satan can raise up a great flame, through God's permission, of a very small spark: neither is there any better way to quench the fire, than by the word of God. But our princes and bishops go the contrary way to work; for they hinder the doctrine of the gospel, by which only the minds and hearts of men can be healed; and in the mean time, they exercise cruel punishment to bring the body from the devil, while they leave him the better part of man, which is the heart and the soul: which thing shall have like success with them as it had with the Jews in times past, who thought to quench Christ by his cross and passion.'"

Calm, logical argument was not the way by which Luther sought to put down such barefaced wickedness

With honest inquirers after truth, whatever their errors may be, patient and affectionate instruction must be employed ; but the blasphemous iniquities of the Munster king of the world, as he styled himself, who, while the people were perishing with famine, “had his store-houses furnished at home, not only for necessity, but also for riot and voluptuousness ;” and who, when one of his “queens” expressed her pity for the sufferings which she could not but see, though she was not permitted to relieve them, had her into the market-place, and publicly “stroke off her head,”—iniquities of this sort are to be boldly and unsparingly exposed. And thus Luther went to work with them. He wrote for the common people ; and such addresses as these could not fail of impressing their readers.\* “In case everything ought to be despised and cast away that wicked men give or have, I marvel surely why they do not as well contemn gold, silver, and other riches, taken from the wicked, and invent some new metal, or other device.” “If the marriages of this former time were to be accounted for whoredom and adultery, because they were contracted, as they say, of such as wanted faith, I pray you do not they grant themselves to be *whore-sonnes*, all the pack of them ? Now if they be bastards and misbegotten, tell me, why do they enjoy the lands and patrimony of the city and of their ancestors ? Rea-

\* The nervous English of the first translation, published only five years after Sleidan’s original work, and some five and twenty after these Munster enormities, is here quoted. Munster was taken in 1535. Sleidan’s Latin “Commentaries” were published in 1555 ; and John Daus had his translation printed in 1560 ; dedicating his book to “his singular good lord, Francis, earl of Bedford, Lord Russell,” &c

son would that this their new kind of matrimony should provide them new possessions and riches, which might have a more honest title. For it is not seemly that so holy and godly a people as they do pretend to be, should live of the unlawful and bastardly goods of harlots ; much less take them from others by violence and plain robbery.”

It was about this time that those expository lectures on the Epistle to the Galatians which are best known in England, and which had been taken down by certain of his hearers, were *retouched* and published by himself. What are properly his “Commentaries” on the epistle, had been published before ; but as this was with him a favourite portion of God’s word, he delivered a series of popular lectures upon it ; and these, which appear to have been spoken *extemporaneously*, and were, “by great diligence of the brethren, gathered together,” constitute what is usually (though not with strict propriety) styled, “A Commentary of Master Doctor Martin Luther upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians.” He wrote a preface for the volume, in which he refers both to Anabaptists and Romanists ; traces their errors to the malice and subtlety of Satan ; and shows the only remedy to be the faithful enunciation of the truth of the gospel. He says, “The conclusion and end is, to hope for no quietness or end of complaint, so long as Christ and Belial do not agree. If one heresy die, by and by another springeth up ; for the devil doth neither slumber nor sleep. I myself, which (though I be nothing) have been now in the ministry about twenty years, can truly witness that I have been assailed by more than twenty sects, of which some are already destroyed ; other some, as the parts

and members of worms or bees that are cut in sunder, do yet pant for life. But Satan, the god of all dissension, stirreth up daily new sects ; and, last of all, which of all other I should never have foreseen nor suspected, he hath raised up a sect of such as teach that the ten commandments ought to be taken out of the church, and that men should not be terrified by the law, but gently exhorted by the preaching of the grace of Christ. As though we were ignorant, or had never taught, that afflicted and broken spirits must be comforted by Christ ; but that the hard-hearted Pharisee, unto whom the grace of God is preached in vain, must be terrified by the law. And they themselves also are forced to devise and imagine certain revelations of God's wrath against unbelievers ; as though the law could be anything else but a revealing of God's wrath against impiety. But let the minister of Christ know that so long as he teacheth Christ purely, there shall not be wanting perverse spirits, yea, even among ourselves, which shall seek, by all means possible, to trouble the church of Christ. And herewithal let him comfort himself, that there is no peace between Christ and Belial, or between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Yea, let him even rejoice in the troubles which he suffereth by these seditious spirits ; for this is our rejoicing, even the testimony of our conscience, that we be found standing and fighting in the behalf of the seed of the woman, against the seed of the serpent. *Let him bite us by the heel, and spare not ; we again will not cease to crush his head, by the grace and help of Christ, the principal bruiser thereof, who is blessed for ever."*

During the remainder of his life Luther continued

to occupy himself in study and labour as diligently as at any former period. Placed by divine Providence at the head of the Reformation, in cases of difficulty all eyes were turned to him. Respected for his unwavering piety, and beloved for the tenderness and affection which he manifested, the most decided confidence was likewise reposed in him for the wisdom which guided the utterance of his opinions, and for the undeniable integrity which he maintained, as well in his intellectual as in his moral character.

As an instance of the watchful care which he exercised over the churches which he had been the instrument of planting, the reason may be quoted, which he, in conjunction with Melancthon and Pomeranus, assigned for disapproving a small treatise, written by a certain pastor in Thuringia, of the name of Thomas Neagorgus, and for advising the author not to publish it. To inquiries on the subject, they "wisely and piously replied." They stated that they had found the subject of predestination very dangerously treated in it; and that the writer said that the elect did not lose the Spirit of God, even though they fell into manifest crimes. They declared that they had unanimously, always, and in all churches, taught the contrary; namely, that if any holy and faithful person knowingly and willingly sinned against the precepts of God, he was to be considered as no longer holy, but as having rejected the Spirit of God. If, indeed, he should repent and return, then God would observe the sworn promise of his grace: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." He will, therefore, receive the returning sinner afresh into his

favour, and will light up in his heart true faith, by the gospel, and the Holy Spirit. They add, "that it is not commanded that we should inquire if we are elected; but that we should know, and firmly hold, that he who finally perseveres in penitence and faith, is to be considered as elect, and to be saved, according to the solemn saying of Christ, Matt. x, 22, 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved.' This doctrine," they say, "is clear, and has no tendency to render the fallen secure, but compels them to fear the wrath of God: for most certain it is, that God is offended with all sins, whether the elect or the non-elect fall into them. Human reason pictures an unrighteous will of God, as though he were a mere tyrant, who approves the acts of certain persons, whether they be good or bad ones, while others he hates whatsoever they do. Such a will ought not to be attributed to God; for it is the saying of eternal truth, 'Thou hatest all workers of iniquity,' Psalm v, 5. God, indeed, accepts those saints in whom sin still remains, but even this is not without a great price of redemption, namely, the sacrifice of Christ; because of which we are received into favour *if we believe, and so long as we believe.*" Seckendorf adds: "He refutes also the objection taken from the case of David, Psalm li, as though he had retained the Holy Spirit while in his sin of adultery and murder. And in the same writing, many things more, to the same effect, he very excellently advances; from which it appears plainly what he really thought on this question, and in what sense the stronger expressions which he has elsewhere employed are to be taken. And thus," continues Seckendorf, "what I have often declared, and which can scarcely be repeated and incul-

cated too frequently, is most clearly and impressively established, that the doctrine of Luther requires, when the question does not relate immediately to the justification of a sinner, that with faith there be conjoined purity of conscience, and, at the very least, abstinence from all known and wilful sin."

To a few miscellaneous observations and occurrences in the closing years of Luther's life will reference now be made, that the persevering uniformity of his character may be evidently apparent. He continued to labour, for labour was pleasant to him; and like all who religiously study the word of God, the more he studied it, the more he perceived of its wonderful excellences, and the more anxiously desirous he was to open to others, for their spiritual benefit, the blessed truths which, in the progress of his diligent and prayerful researches, had been unfolded to his own mind. But while these pursuits exhibited the diligent minister of God's word, there were occasions which served to show the man; the man in whom nature was not destroyed by grace, but sanctified, and thus illustrated and adorned. In the year 1540 Melancthon had a very severe and alarming attack of illness. He appears, indeed, to have been completely subdued by his mental labours and exercises. Excited by his work, and eagerly intent upon the objects that were from time to time presented, he overlooked the symptoms of failing energy, till, while on a journey, his nervous system gave way, and he sunk at once, thoroughly exhausted, and, as may be gathered from Luther's subsequent language, most painfully dispirited. Luther was sent for; and when he arrived he found his friend apparently at the very last gasp. His eyes were failing, his under-

standing nearly lost, the power of speech and hearing almost gone, his countenance was sunken and deathly; he noticed no one, and took neither food nor drink. Luther, seeing him, was overwhelmed with consternation. Addressing himself to the companions of his journey, he exclaimed, "O my good God! that Satan should have been permitted to spoil so fine an instrument." But he knew his refuge. Turning his face to the window, he *poured out his heart before God* with the earnestness and importunacy of one who delighted in prayer, and had often experienced its blessedness and success. Seckendorf says that he could not express in Latin the holy boldness of Luther on this occasion, and only gives its substance.\* He seemed to be pleading with God, placing before him all the promises that prayer should be heard which might be alleged from Scripture, and almost enforcing them upon him. "Thou must hear and answer me," he said, "if thou wilt to maintain my trust in thy promises."

Glassius, as quoted by Seckendorf, then proceeds to describe what followed. Taking the hand of Melancthon, whose case he seems thoroughly to have understood, he addressed him in language directly aiming at the removal of his depression, saying what he said not only with the affectionate earnestness of a friend, and the true sympathy of a Christian brother, but with the solemn authority of the minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Be of good courage, my Philip," he said; "for thou shalt not die: although God has always sufficient reason for slaying us, yet he wills not the

\* *Parrhesia hæc vix exprimi Latine potest; sensus est, &c.*

*Itaque cogebatur (ait) me exaudire, si fiduciam meam in promissiones suas conservare vellet.*



death of a sinner, but that he should turn from his way and live. He delights in our life, and not in our death. If the greatest sinners that ever lived in the world, that is to say, Adam and Eve, he called and received into his favour, much less will he cast thee away, or allow thee to perish in thy sin and grief. Wherefore, give no place to this spirit of sadness, nor become a homicide to thyself; but trust thou in God, who is able to kill and to make alive."

While he thus spoke, Melancthon began to revive. There can be no doubt but that, as, on the one hand, physical exhaustion had prepared the way for mental depression, so, on the other, the bodily disorder was greatly aggravated by the mental suffering, the removal of which was thus necessary to the patient's recovery. In his weakness, he had looked at his own unworthiness, his natural sinfulness, his unfaithfulness; and looking at these only, a settled gloom had spread over his whole spirit, and now threatened his very life. Luther spoke to him in the name of the Lord, and called him away from himself to the contemplation of the infinite goodness of his redeeming God, as declared in sacred Scripture. The sick man had the only remedy thus brought nigh to him; and, by the blessing of God, it was effectual. He received with thankfulness and faith the encouraging declaration of his friend. He took heart;\* the restored quietness of his mind soothed and allayed the irritation of his nerves; the crisis of his disorder passed away favourably, and from that time he gradually regained strength, till he was fully restored to his former health. Subsequently, re-

\* Hæc dum ita proloquitur, reviviscere quasi et spiritum ducere Philippus incipit, &c.

ferring to the circumstances, in a letter to a friend, he declares his belief that he should have died but for this visit of Luther, who thus recalled him from impending death.\*

A similar instance of Luther's sympathy with his friend is furnished by a letter which, in January, 1541, he wrote to Frederic Myconius, superintendent of Gotha, then dangerously ill. The letter, only part of which is given by Seckendorf, is said by him to be full of suitable consolation for a person supposed to be drawing near to death, and to express that full and unshaken reliance which he felt and cherished that his prayers should not be unheard.

Among other things, he says, "I pray and beseech our Lord Jesus, our life, our salvation, and our health, that he would not add this to my other afflictions, that I should see thee, or some other of our friends, breaking through the veil, and pressing into their rest, while I am left behind, still dwelling among devils, while you go before. I pray that our Lord would visit me with thy sickness, and put me in thy place; commanding me, exhausted, as I am, and past service, to lay down this now useless tabernacle." And in the foot of the same letter he writes, "Farewell, my Frederic. May our Lord not suffer me to hear of thy removal, myself still living; but may he make thee my survivor. This I desire; this I will. And let my will be done. Amen! Because this my will seeks neither my own pleasure nor profit, but only the glory of God's name. Once more, farewell. We pray for thee with our whole soul, and are most grievously troubled and afflicted by thy sickness."

\* *Fuissem extinctus, nisi adventu Lutheri ex media morte revocatus essem.*

Luther's prayer was heard. Myconius not only recovered from what was then supposed to be a desperate sickness, but he did actually, though by only a short space, survive his great leader. He died on the 7th of April, 1546, one month after Luther.

That the work of this venerable servant of God was almost done, became, indeed, increasingly evident. He had lived most temperately, or he could not have lived as long as he did ; but he had not spared himself, and his labours had been far more wearing and exhausting than had they been only physical. With his robust constitution, under ordinary circumstances, the utmost limits of human life might have been reached ; but he felt as deeply and acutely, as he laboured unremittingly ; and therefore, though he lived temperately, yet he *lived fast*, and was *an old man* many years before he would have been so in the usual order of nature. And he was aware of this, and therefore looked forward with holy desire to what he believed to be the nearly-approaching period of rest from his labours, though, at the same time, the old spirit was strong within him, and while life lasted he delighted to labour. Thus, in 1542, writing to Anthony Lanterbach, he says, " Let us go on, preaching, praying, and bearing. There is a reward for our work, and we do not labour in vain." He then requests his friend to pray for him, that in good time he might fall asleep, saying, " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." And in February, 1544, he concludes a letter to Spalatinus by saying, " Farewell in the Lord : and pray for me, that I may happily remove out of this body of sin and death."\*

\* Ut feliciter migrem ex corpore, &c.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE fruitless conference of Ratisbon was interrupted while in progress by an event which the Romanists hailed with a satisfaction hardly less vivid than was the grief of their more virtuous antagonists. The sudden removal of their venerable guide and father from the scene of his earthly labours filled the hearts of Protestant Europe with a common and awful sorrow. For some years past the health of the great reformer had been breaking up. In addition to the inroads on his constitution of that cruel disorder, the stone,—a complaint which his sedentary habits tended greatly to aggravate,—his physical strength had long been sapped by the toils of a mind impatient of the restraints and weakness of its material minister. The numerous and keen anxieties incident to that work which was the one absorbing business of his life had further contributed to wear down a frame already shattered by the accesses of various disease ; while the frequent and dark fits of despondency, induced by nervous exhaustion, had also lent their aid to stimulate, by reaction, the activity of those morbid causes from which they sprang. Shortly after his marriage, Luther had been seized with one of those excruciating paroxysms of his original malady, which are, perhaps, beyond all other forms of bodily suffering, the most terrific. From the effects of this severe illness he appears never to have thoroughly rallied. As age drew on, such spasmodic seizures, though generally less violent, oftener

recurred than in former years; every fresh attack leaving him spoiled of some fragment of his corporeal vigour. During the last few months of his existence, infirmities fell thick upon him. His sight failed; and notwithstanding the robust energy which had characterized his prime of manhood, he describes himself, at the age of sixty-three, as "very old, and feeble, and having only one eye."

In this state, he complied with an invitation from the counts of Mansfeldt, and set out, early in 1546, for his native town of Eisleben, to arbitrate some disputes which had recently arisen between those noblemen regarding their several rights of property in certain of the mines of that neighbourhood.

The voluntary submission of the disputing lords to the judgment of an umpire who, born one of the humblest of their own vassals, was eminent only in virtue of a grand intellect and a holy cause, constituted as remarkable a tribute to his singular ability and worth as could have graced the last days of the reformer. On his arrival at Eisleben, he was met by the two counts, with a retinue of a hundred horsemen, and escorted to the lodging which they had prepared for his reception. Every token of an affectionate veneration awaited him. His table was supplied by the noblemen whose differences he was called to adjust; and the whole population of the place, with an honourable pride in the high and sacred achievements of their immortal fellow-townsmen, vied with each other in manifesting their united and grateful esteem. But the reverent joy which his presence, in the scene of his birth, awakened, was soon to be exchanged for a mourning as universal and heartfelt as ever followed the translation

of an illustrious spirit from the cares and pains of this world to a region of happier and purer being.

The fatigue of so long a journey, undertaken in the depth of an inclement winter, and protracted by a flood, rendering the usual roads impassable, proved too much for the enfeebled health of the reformer. For some few days, the delight of visiting the home of his youth, and the hope of reconciling the feudal superiors, whom he loved with a remnant of the clan-feeling of an older period, infused new animation into the pulses of a heart which was prone to throb with every generous and fine emotion. But the chillness of the grave was at hand. As the month of February advanced, he became unable to leave the house. On the 16th of that month, when obliged to confine himself to his own apartments, he observed to his friend Jonas, who, with Celius, the Protestant curate of Eisleben, was in attendance on him, "Here I was born and baptized: what if I should remain to die here also?" On the evening of the 17th he complained of a painful oppression on the chest; but conversed during supper with his customary cheerfulness, expounding more than one striking passage of Scripture; and declaring, with a peculiar emphasis, that if he might only be permitted to succeed in his endeavours to reconcile the proprietors of his native country, he would return home, and die content. At eleven o'clock he retired to his bed, complaining of the increased weight at his breast; but, unable to rest, he soon rose again, and was assisted into the adjoining room. Count Albert, of Mansfeldt, and his lady, summoned by Jonas, now arrived; and two physicians were called in, who came immediately, but in vain. Aware that he was dying, Luther now

prayed aloud, saying, "O my heavenly Father, God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all consolation, I thank thee for having revealed to me thy well-beloved Son, in whom I trust, whom I have acknowledged, and preached, and loved; but whom the pope, and they who have no religion, persecute and oppose. To thee, O Jesus Christ, I commend my soul! I am casting off this earthly body, and passing from this life; but I know that with thee I shall abide eternally." He then recited the words of the psalmist: "Into thy hands I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth!" These words he repeated three times, his voice growing fainter with each repetition. Cordials were administered, in the hope of reviving him; but had so little effect, that it was with extreme difficulty that he could articulate an answer to the questions which his friends addressed to him. Only when Jonas, perceiving that the end was near, said, "Dearest father, do you verily confess Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer?" he made a great effort, and replied in a tone sufficiently distinct to be heard by every person present, "Yes." It was the last word of the expiring saint. The coldness of death gathered on his face and forehead; his breath came heavily; and with eyes closed, and his hands clasped, he remained apparently unconscious of what passed around him, until, between two and three o'clock, the tide of mortal life ebbed back, leaving the mighty spirit landed in eternity.

Thus, in his sixty-fourth year, died Martin Luther, uttering forth with his latest breath his confidence in that Saviour whom in this world it was his highest glory to have made known to a deluded, faithless, and

forgetful generation. When the tidings of his death were communicated to Melancthon, that greatest of his surviving associates, he burst into tears, exclaiming, in the language of Elisha, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

It was the wish of the counts of Mansfeldt to have interred the body of Luther in the town of his nativity; but the elector directed the burial to be at Wittenberg. After lying for two days in the church of St. Andrew, in Eisleben,—where Jonas preached over it a discourse from the text, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,"—the corpse was attended on the road to Wittenberg by the prince of Anhalt, and the principal nobility of the adjacent districts, including many ladies, together with a prodigious concourse of the common people. On its arrival at the gate of the city of Halle, the procession was met by the clergy and senate; followed by a multitude so dense, that its progress through the streets was difficult. As it passed along, the vast crowd sung the one hundred and thirtieth Psalm; and every man pressed before his neighbour to catch a glimpse only of the bier.

On the 22d of February the cavalcade reached Wittenberg. The whole body of the senators, accompanied by the professors and students of the university, with almost the entire population of the city and its suburbs, received it at the barrier. The body, preceded by the barons of Mansfeldt and their suite, and followed by the family of the illustrious deceased, was thence conveyed to the cathedral church. There Pomeranus delivered a sermon appropriate to the



occasion; after which the celebrated funeral oration of Melancthon did justice to the memory of the dead, while it bespoke alike the grief, the genius, and the ardent piety of the speaker. The coffin was then lowered into the grave by the hands of several distinguished members of the university.

The tomb of Luther, in the cathedral of Wittenberg, bears the following inscription:—

MARTINI· LUTHERI· S· THEOLO-  
GLÆ· D· CORPUS· H· L· S· E· QUI  
AN· CHRISTI· M·D· XLVI· XII  
CAL· MARTII· EYSLEBII· IN PA-  
TRIA· S· M· O· C· V· ANN· LXIII  
M· II· D· X·\*

THE character of Luther is a study and exemplar for all ages. Considered only as the visible spring of those vast and beneficent results which have flowed from its manifestations, that character would, indeed, form one of the grand resting-places of inquiry to the philosophical historian. When we remember to what a prodigious height of guilt and power the arch-pontificate had erected itself, before the reign of Leo X., and with the elevation and tyrannical force of those days contrast its subsequent declension and present impotence, we cannot but be smitten with a mingled sentiment of awe and admiration. It is truly not to be thought,

\* Here lies interred the body of Martin Luther, Doctor of Divinity, who died at Eisleben, the place of his birth, on the 18th of February, in the year of Christ 1546, having lived 63 years, 3 months, and 10 days.

without amazement, that the superb fabric of a fraudulent ambition, the throne of a despotism which clothed itself with the thunders of Omnipotence, and assumed to wield the final destinies of men, should have been shaken and abased by the efforts of one who, born in obscurity, wrestling through the far greater portion of his life with the oppressions of disease and poverty, and unaided by a solitary advantage of worldly distinction, was, nevertheless, enabled to arouse the chained spirit of Europe from its ghastly and long dream of superstition, and revive within the hearts of nations that vital liberty of thought, without which the mere external forms of freedom are but a fiction and a shadow.

Nor do we here assert for Luther anything like an invidious pre-eminence over his faithful and illustrious abettors. Their labours be it far from us to depreciate, or in any way to derogate from their just praise, as it still lives in all the churches of Protestant Christendom. All that we claim for the great master spirit of the Reformation is the honour due to the originator, the guide, and superintending regulator of a movement which has had no parallel, for breadth and grandeur, since the age when, in the strength of their divine commission, the first apostles went through all regions, *turning the world upside down.* That such peculiar and high honour truly belonged to Luther, his surviving brethren were the prompt and eloquent witnesses. Conscious of their own deep obligations to his counsel and instructions, and unforgetful of that wise and dauntless energy which, evoked by his example in themselves, had never flinched from the utterance of the truth, no matter at what extremity of individual

hazard, those worthy assistants of so noble a leader bore ample and emphatic testimony to his extraordinary gifts and virtue. Indeed, it cannot be denied, that while the Reformation conspicuously, above every other event in modern history, shows the active presence of a more than human power, overruling circumstances, and adapting agents, with a wisdom as beneficent as it was unerring ; that event also bears, through all its various relations, and especially in the determination and distinctive frame of intellect which it impressed upon the mass of European society, the very stamp and effigies of the genius and the soul of Luther.

The moral feature which, on the face of Luther's biography, at once arrests our admiring sympathy, is the singular and sustained intrepidity of his conduct. In estimating the value and the sources of this quality, it is not to be doubted, that along the whole current of his life, as well as in those critical moments when it is scarcely too much to say that the fate of the human mind, through all future time, hung upon his resolution, there was a hand upholding the reformer, and a "spirit of courage" breathed into his being, of which the heroism of this world knows nothing. Nor may we question that the same afflating influence could have wrought an equal boldness in creatures whose constitutional timidity was excessive and effeminate. But admitting, as we cordially do admit, the invigoration of the man by an inspired and heavenly energy, ever adequate to the exigency of the instant occasion, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that, by original privilege of nature, Luther was invested with a force of temperament, and an indomitable courage, which

have never been excelled. Neither does this statement at all derogate from that reference of his acts to the final direction of a higher and sovereign Disposer, upon which no one more earnestly than himself insisted. It is surely not dishonourable to the providential sway and foresight of that Being from whom is the preparation of the heart, to believe, that he so constituted the moral being of Luther, as to render it a congenial and apt instrument for the work to which it was specifically designated.

In tracing the developments of this daring and aweless principle, we are again struck by the adaptation of circumstantial causes to elicit, at once, and, by exertion, to enliven and to aggrandize, its power. It has been shrewdly observed of the first Cesar, that his early privation of the care and guidance of a father had a beneficial effect upon his character and destiny, inasmuch as it threw him so entirely on his own intimate resources as to bring out a habit of self-dependance which was ultimately of essential service in promoting his magnificent successes. The actual conditions of the youth of Luther, though widely different in themselves, were not without a similar tendency. With an understanding of prodigious grasp and penetration, opened out and quickened by an education far superior to the scanty instruction of his parents and companions, the reaches of his thought, and the tastes peculiar to knowledge, set him apart from those who, in the ordinary course of things, should have ruled his actions, and dictated his choice. Hence his mind grew into solidity, and learned to rely upon itself, on its own promptings and deliberate judgment. The extreme poverty in which he passed his younger days was

another circumstance aiding to induce and to confirm the same habitual trust in his own individual energies. It thrust into operation the active forces, as information had expanded and given impulse to the intellectual faculty. Luther was thus taught not only to be swift and self-assured in his decisions, but ready and strong in execution. To resolve, and to be doing, were, with him, the business of one and the same instant. He allowed no interval of hesitation, no plausible delay, under pretence of reconsidering the matter presently in hand, to cheat him of his purpose. There was, therefore, an inflexible steadfastness about him, and a forthright promptitude of will, which were of inappreciable utility in his contest with the minions of the popedom. If, in mature age, these properties sometimes gave an air of hardness to his resolutions, and made him cling, with exorbitant tenacity to the opinions which he had once avowed, the cases of error were so few, and the fault in itself so venial, as to be only the dust in the balance when weighed against the mighty conquest which they mainly contributed to achieve for freedom and religion.

But with this rooted and firm self-confidence there was associated a depth and candour of feeling, which is not often to be found in the same combination. The men of practical vigour, and decisive temper, are, for the most part, those who have little of the softer and milky attributes of humanity in their composition. Their sensibilities are dull, their attachments rare and cold. Generally, they are encrusted with a certain ruggedness, a stern and hard exterior, which seems both to shut up the inner passions as in an impervious case, and to be almost invulnerable to the touch of

sympathy from others. Such men are, rarely, in a large degree, accessible to the benign influences of social charity; still less have they of the fine senses which imagination grafts upon the ever-stirring appetite for love from without. All that the world has of beautiful, and delicate, and tender, of the touching and the grand, is but as sweet sounds to the deaf, or colour to the blind. Even if, as will sometimes happen, the cardinal affections should be deep and big in persons of this energetic and determined stamp, they have commonly only a narrow range; they seldom wander far from the homestead and the hearth, or embrace creatures who have no claims but those of kindred warmth, and sympathetic mutuality. In short, it is one of the rarest things in actual life to see people of that resolute and stirring temperament which vanquishes difficulty, and succumbs not to terror, endowed with much of that idealized fervour which the Greeks called *enthusiasm*; a word of which only they who have the *thing* can ever hope to apprehend the full and precise import.

But with this subtle essence, this genial enthusiasm, the whole spirit of Luther, through all its functions, was animated and imbued. His affections, friendships, tastes and occupations, even his enmities, were impregnated and pervaded by it. It gave tenderness to the endearments of his domestic circle, and won to him the fraternal confidence of his associates. The passages which record his emotions as a parent, his grief for the death of his daughter Madeline, (who was taken from him in her childhood,) and, among others, the exquisite letter which he wrote to his eldest son, then only fourteen years of age, during the session of the

Diet of Augsburg, manifest an overflowing of paternal love, as affecting as it is grateful. The great and strong heart which had glowed with so mighty an indignation at the profligacies of ecclesiastical misrule,—which had quailed not under the fiercest denuncements of the mitred tyranny of Rome, and throbbed only with a more heroic pulse before the arrayed malignity of the emperor and his satellites at Worms,—beats, in these instances, with the tenderness of infancy, and the yearnings of a mother. When Melancthon, himself one of the kindest of human beings, lay on the bed of sickness, Luther tended him with something more than the solicitude of a brother. The sufferer, on his recovery, tells us that but for the consolations and the ministering sympathy of his friend, he should certainly have died. So when Tetzels, terrified and broken-hearted, was at the point of death, deserted and condemned by those whose battle he had fought, Luther, oblivious of the inexorable rancour with which that person had assailed him, writes to the expiring monk a letter full of comfort and forgiveness. He was indeed one of the few who have ever really possessed the high-souled generosity that knows how

“*Debellare superbos,—parcere victis.*”

Then his love for the scenes of his younger life, Eisenach, where he was at school, which he calls, in years long after, his “own beloved town,” and his birth-place, Eisleben, together with the anxious wish that haunted his very death-bed, to secure the happiness and tranquillity of his native district, touchingly bespeak the genuine and deep susceptibility of all the “fair humanities” and loveliest impressions of our kind.

Over all his personal tastes, too, reigned the same fine spirit of a manly and alive sensibility, not exuberant and bordering on that degenerate and sickly appetite for the pathetic which scorns the "daily food" and the common-places of living experience; but cordial, discriminative, and intelligent. Of beauty, in its manifold shapes and evanescent hues, whether in nature or art, few of his contemporaries had an apter appreciation. To this faculty, his affectionate intercourse with the painter Carnac, and protection of the artificial embellishments of the Saxon churches from that merciless lust of destruction which seized\* the unhappy Carlostadt, would abundantly testify, had we no other evidence that he actually possessed it. His passion for music is well known; and the solemn flow of that noble harmony which he adapted to the hundredth Psalm has made familiar to all ears his admirable felicity in composition. There is, perhaps, no species of mental fabrication which so faithfully expresses the ruling qualities of the artist's mind, as does the work of musical combination. In the productions of Luther, in this sort, we read a transcript of the subdued, but not sad, solemnity, and the august imagery, of the Hebrew prophets, which habitually overhung the thoughts of the composer. There is a character of deep night about them, a vague suggestion of the grave, and a memory of the stars. Simple as they are,—and, for devotional purposes, the simpler always the better,—they show the writer to have reached a preconception of the austere grandeur and dramatic manifestation of the logical subject, which are the unapproached excellences of the labours of Mozart and Handel. We could wish, indeed, that the mere mechanical stringers



of crotchets and quavers, who, in this country, manufacture what are called psalm-tunes, would only strive to acquire a perception of the symbolical propriety—the melodious utterance of a feeling accordant with the awful holiness of divine worship—which so observably characterizes the sacred harmonies of Luther. We might then hope to be saved the pain of having our ears pierced, in church or chapel, with the groaning and shrieking psalmody which so often defiles some of the noblest stanzas that were ever written by an uninspired poet.

We have lingered on these milder traits of the great reformer's nature, because it has been the fashion with many writers to dwell with an unfriendly affectation of charity and candour upon the vehemences of his controversial displays, as if they really inferred an acerb and ruthless disposition. To read the lamentations of some of his biographers over the alleged licenses of his style in disputation; their lachrymose regrets for the intemperance, not to say scurrility, into which, forsooth, he occasionally suffered his irritation to betray him; one would almost suppose that Luther had sinned against every canon of fair argumentation and retort, by converting his polemical writings into the mere equipage of personal virulence and slander. These amiable sentimentalists, who thus weep for the absence of forbearing civility, which, being then unborn, would never yet have seen the light but for that culture of the social charities which is one of the fragrant fruits of the principles of the Reformation, forget that in the days of Luther courtesy formed no part of the rules of literary battle. The encounter was with sharp lances; and they who provoked attack were

bound to take the wounds they might receive in the onslaught without flinching or complaint. But, the custom of the age apart, there was a justifying need for the fiery tone of Luther; and he knew it. As he said himself, he would have spoken thunder, could he have exchanged the tamer language of this world for the voices of the heavens. Had his publications been less caustic, they would have proved inefficacious: the bull of excommunication probably would never have been published; nor the truth of God vindicated as it was at Worms and Augsburg. But let any reader, who has taken up with this shallow prejudice, only turn to the pages of any of the most bitter of his numerous philippics, and find, if he can, a single example of unjust personality, or venomous recrimination, out of the direct and legitimate current of his discourse. True it is that he branded Tetzels, Ecks, and others of his earlier antagonists, with the unenviable titles of impostors, liars, and blasphemers; that in good round phrase he proclaimed Leo X. to be in league with the devil to destroy the souls of his vassals; and that even the polished Erasmus did not escape his pungent invective. But who will now dare to say that the ruffianly recklessness evinced by some of those adversaries, their violations of all decorum and civilized usage, invasions of those sacred privacies of domestic life which the wretch who should now venture to profane would be hounded out of society;—who, we ask, can bring to his remembrance the outrages of every kind which were heaped upon him, and still say that the very harshest epithets ever applied by Luther to his assailants amounted to an adequate retaliation for their crimes against himself? The polite and learned priest

of Rotterdam, to whom, as a moral being, it would be doing infinite injustice to place him in comparison even with Eck, the best of all the remaining host of Luther's opposers ; even that eminent personage, with his silken horror of the rout created by the man of Wittenberg for the sake of truth, stooped to the baseness of stabbing his ancient friend by a libel, not on himself alone, but equally impugning the honour of his wife.

For ourselves we confess that we have small patience for the weak and idle outcry in regard to the excessive violence of Luther. No doubt his indignation spake out broadly, and with no silver note ; but we have read our history awrong, if ever the pride and power of a time-strengthened structure of depravity and despotism were broken down by the smooth phrases of courtly breeding. There was a task to be done so gigantic as to verge on utter hopelessness. It was no common tone, chastened down to the whispering fretfulness of etiquette, that could have stirred the dead heart of nations grown gray in an immemorial slavery. The voice needed to be both loud and stern which was to call up the latent humanity of a world held prostrate and bound for ages under the armed mastery of Rome. It was neither a single nor a subdued sound of the trumpet ; but a blast, sharp and vehement, and seven times reiterated, that brought down the walls of Jericho.

But, allowing for some latitude of judgment, on this point, there can be no denial that the exasperate reclamations of Luther were, under the provocations that awaited him, a necessity of his nature. The very intensity of his emotions, and the fervid vitality which steeped his entire organization of mind, enlivened and imbittered his indignant defiances of the corrupt power

that sought to overrule and crush him. His loathing of the vast and sacrilegious usurpation against which he fought, was but a reflux of the generous ardour that shed over his blander moods a lustre and a life of happiness. To have tamed the out-blazing anger which he poured on the arch-see and its defenders, the rush of his blood, and the whole frame-work of his being, must have been first stopped and remodelled. If, after all, some shade of reproach must, on account of a supposed defect of self-command, mingle with our veneration of a character otherwise so illustrious, let it at least be recollected, that in the fault itself (if fault it were) we see the flashes of a burning and clear sincerity, which is worth a thousand of the strait proprieties of manners.

And let it never be forgotten, in examining this part of Luther's history, that the matter of strife was not a mere question of opinion, but reached to the very essence of the gospel, and deeply affected the whole work of human salvation. When controversy refers only to what is consistent with what St. Paul terms, emphatically and exclusively, (in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians,) the gospel which he had preached, and which answers the all-important question, What must I do to be saved? then let it be calm in feeling and courteous in expression, and let our opponent be regarded as our brother. But if Luther was right, the case had occurred which the apostle himself describes, and on which the inspiring Spirit led him to pronounce an unequivocal decision, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, or any man, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, and that ye have received, let him be ac-

cursed." The Roman system which Luther attacked was exactly another gospel; and as such, and with a proper feeling of the dishonour done to God, and the peril in which souls were placed by its means, did it require to be attacked. It was not an erroneous opinion which Luther assailed, so much as a moral corruption; and his antagonists were those who, knowing that the word of God was against them, sought to defend themselves by mysterious traditions, and who employed against their assailants all the terrors of the civil power,—confiscation and imprisonment, stripes, and a horrible death. Of such a system, and of its abettors, the truth could only be spoken in terms which described not merely their intellectual errors, but their moral guilt; and such terms, with a deep feeling of their justice, were those which Luther employed.

There is another aspect under which the natural history of the reformer's mind challenges a still warmer reverence, and more grateful eulogy. We have had occasion, as we passed along, to remark upon the nameless fascination which the shadowy and mystic grandeur of antiquity exercises over a vivid and far-reaching imagination. With all high thinkers, indeed, there is a certain prescriptive and almost infrangible spell in things, not unpleasing in themselves, upon which time has laid its old and solemnizing tinctures. Be it not sneeringly objected, that the feeling is visionary and poetical: amidst the cold and hard realities of an on-going existence, it is not, perhaps, the *worse* for that; certainly not the less potential. But Luther had a rich fund of poetry in his nature. The vague distances in which the origin of the Papal polity lost itself, had, for his thoughts, a charm like the hazy

depths of a landscape, and one which it was no easy matter to shake off. Add to this, that the Roman Church lavished upon her ceremonies all the exquisite appliances of art, and wound around them those seductive appeals to the ideal faculty, through the medium of the senses, which seem to lift the soul into oblivion of the clay ; that sculpture gave its forms, animate with the mute passion of a moment, seized and set fast, as in a purer incarnation ; that the mirrored life of painting looked down from altars reeking with sweet perfumes, and radiant faces shone from the pictured canvass with a benignant holiness upon the worshipper ; while music revelled in luxurious flexions along aisles vocal with litanies of penitence, that, mixing with the tide of "numerous sound," were borne aloft, as if carried by it from the earth. Ponder then the natural effect of these combined influences on a spirit keenly alive to their impressions ; think how easily the rapt elevation they induce might have been allowed to throw a redeeming beauty around the offices of that church in whose communion he was born, and to interpose a dazzling veil between the reformer and the abuses which he stood forth to combat ; and then we come to know something of the might and magnitude of the moral reason of Luther, which could fling aside blandishments so congenial to the passionate sentiment of a German, with a poet's heart, and nobly guide himself by his sole conviction of the right, and the immutable behest of the Most High.

And here we are brought back to the predominant quality of the reformer's state of intellect, and the key to all his greatness. It was that settled and well-poised supremacy of the logical understanding which kept

sway over a mind full of many and bright powers. Away from all moral impulses, this just order of the thinking man imparted to his acts a steadiness and an onward energy which were the image and reflection of the compact strength within. Other minds, with as much native vigour, and more brilliancy, there have been, whose faculties, wanting this cohesion, consistency, and consolidated unity, were dissipated, and grew unproductive.

But when the Bible unrolled its hallowed pages to the eyes of Luther, and conscience purged by divine illumination and instruction waxed clear and peremptory in its biddings, the mission came to him as to a giant already armed for the fight that lay before him. It is not easy to imagine a more affecting demonstration of the far-prescient benevolence and overswaying operation of the divine will, than appears in this pre-construction of an organ so singularly fitted as was the vigorous humanity of Luther to work out the instrumental regeneration of a people perishing in the darkness of an aged and ghostly bondage. Of the struggle that ensued, of Luther's persevering fidelity in the discharge of his sacred trust, of his holy bravery in the hour of uttermost peril, and the vigilant care of Providence, which, ever holding him in charge, supported, led, and shielded him to the end, we have drawn a rapid and imperfect sketch. Of many of those benefits which, under God's blessing, have flowed from his exertions, including that practical recognition of the Christian morality which is the spring and bond of social freedom, we live in an enjoyment so continuous and familiar, as to be sometimes in danger of growing thankless and forgetful. But the final and completed

results of the conquest which dawned upon him in this world, and of which the young morning is with us, will be revealed only in the broad daylight of eternity.

Of Luther, on the whole, it may be said, that a firmer spirit, a mind more resolutely honest, self-oblivious, and unswerving, has never—except in the case of Him who wrapped the fulness of the Godhead in human flesh—been permitted to shed dignity upon our fallen nature. Other men have pulled down tyrants and stirred empires to revolt against oppression. In some rare instances, neither avarice nor ambition has fixed a stain upon their fame. But where in all history is the individual who, raised from lowest poverty and personal insignificance to be the counsellor of princes and the teacher of mankind, was, equally with Luther, proof against all temptations to turn aside from the even walk of probity and severe disinterestedness? Mere affluence, indeed, he might not have coveted. Unused to the voluptuous appendages of wealth, and careless of external decoration, they might have had but few or no attractions for him. But when it is reflected, that at one period the Protestant churches of all Germany lay at his feet, supplicating him to reorganize their system and government, the bright integrity of his soul shines out conspicuous and sublimely. To have grasped at power, when it was thus delivered up into his hands, would have been yielding only to a natural and proud infirmity. Had he built up a hierarchy, in which some station of pre-eminent control should have been reserved for his own occupancy, who could have reasonably withstood, or even, with ostensible justice, have reproached him? But his ambition was of a diviner stamp. It pointed not to the glittering



furniture of earthly state, or the gathering of subject crowds around his seat; but to that assured reward of the righteous which, commencing in the triumph of the truths they speak on earth, is consummated in a happier region, by the gift of a crown that fadeth not away. Are we asked for the memorials of Luther's virtue, and the proof that his designation was of God? Look forth upon the world, now rising in the freshness and moral beauty of an awakened Christianity; let the eye rest on England, with its myriad temples, and the ear be gladdened with its sabbath bells; count the houses of prayer which have sprung up amidst the forest wildernesses of America; think of Ethiopia stretching out her hands to her Redeemer, and the arid boundlessness of African deserts grown vocal with his praise; of the Indian widow snatched from the flame, and the babe rescued from the flood; remember the tottering throne of the prophet, and the prostration of the Roman antichrist; and see in these the tokens and the seal of Luther's commission from heaven, and the wide consequences of the Reformation. In a sense fully as much nobler as it is more extensive than their original purport, we may apply to the reformer the words of that fine inscription in our own metropolitar. cathedral, commemorative of its builder:—

“LECTOR, SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS, CIRCUMSPICE.”



## APPENDIX.

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THE following table of occurrences, comprised in the period intervening between the birth and death of Luther, will not only aid the reader in the *orderly recollection* of the leading facts of the reformer's own history, but will present him with a view of the general character and progress of events; and thus suggest useful considerations as to the state of society, both civil and ecclesiastical. A single glance will show that the Wittenberg professor lived in stirring times. The winter had passed away, and everywhere might be seen the evidences of active vegetation, though few could even conjecture what fruits the harvest would supply. Of one kind of seed alone can the results be certainly predicted. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you."

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A. D.

- 1483. (Nov. 10.) Martin Luther born, at Eisleben, in Saxony.
- 1484. Ulrich Zuingle born, in Switzerland.
- 1485. Accession of Henry VII. to the throne of England.
- 1486. The Portuguese sail as far as the Cape of Good Hope.
- 1487. A crusade against the Waldenses; the pope encouraging it by the promise of a plenary indulgence.
- 1490. A German translation of the Vulgate.  
Attempt of Pope Innocent VIII. to impose the *tenth penny* upon the French clergy; but opposed by the University of Paris.
- 1491. Siege and capture of Grenada by Ferdinand and Isabella; and the consequent termination of the Moorish dominion in Spain.

A. D.

1492. Ferdinand and Isabella order the Jews to depart from their respective states; and obtain from the pope, as a recompense, the title of Catholic.  
Columbus discovers America. (The West Indies.)  
The profligate and abandoned Cardinal Borgia made pope. His pontificate was signalized by his vices; his chief aim being to enrich *his children*, especially the notorious Cesar Borgia, not less wicked than his father, and more audacious.
1493. Death of the emperor Frederic III., and election of Maximilian I.  
Alexander VI. publishes a bull, dividing between Spain and Portugal the countries which their respective navigators might discover in either hemisphere.
1494. First knowledge of *algebra* in Europe.  
Charles VIII. (of France) invades Naples. Thus began those wars on account of Italy, which continued, with few intervals of peace, till 1559; and which had, indirectly, a most important influence on the progress of the Reformation.
1496. The University of Aberdeen founded.  
Cabot discovers (for England) the island of Newfoundland.
1497. Melancthon born.  
Americus Vesputius, a Florentine, lands on the American continent; which afterward is known by his name.  
The University of Copenhagen founded.
1498. Vasco de Gama *doubles the Cape of Good Hope*, and sails to India.  
Jerome Savonarola, a Dominican, who had ventured to speak against the pope, and to preach the necessity of religious amendments, burnt, *for heresy*, at Florence.
1499. The University of Alcalá (Complutum) founded.
1500. The Portuguese discover Brazil.
1501. Martin Luther enters the university at Erfurt.
1502. University of Wittenberg founded.
1503. The pope (Alexander) killed accidentally, by taking the poison he had prepared for one of his cardinals.

A. D.

1504. Complaints against the grievances of the court of Rome, urged by the Germans to their emperor.
1505. Luther enters the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt, and becomes acquainted there with true evangelical doctrine.
1506. University of Frankfort-on-the-Oder founded by Joachim, elector of Brandenburg.  
Julius II. lays the first stone of St. Peter's at Rome. (Finished 1614.)
1508. Luther appointed professor of philosophy in the University of Wittenberg.
1509. Accession of Henry VIII. in England. Wolsey (afterward cardinal) high in favour with him.
1510. Calvin born, in France.  
Luther goes to Rome on a deputation from his order. All he saw there revolting to his feelings.
1511. Maximilian and the king of France call for a general council.  
Goa, in India, conquered for the king of Portugal, by Albuquerque.  
The pope convokes *the Lateran Council* at Rome. (Concluded in March, 1517.)
1512. Luther made doctor in divinity.
1513. John de Medici elected pope; takes the name of Leo X.
1515. Accession of Francis I. to the French throne.
1516. Accession of Charles V. to the Spanish throne. Union of the Spanish monarchy under him.
1517. The dissolution of the Lateran Council, having had twelve sessions. It was entirely a Papal one, and condemned the principles established at the Councils of Constance and Basil, relating to the subordination of the pope to a general council. The Papal supremacy appeared to be fully and finally established.  
Leo X. publishes his "indulgences." Tetzel their salesman in Germany.  
(Oct. 31.) Luther publishes his theses against these indulgences.
1518. Another edition of the Bible in German, translated from the Vulgate.

A. D.

1518. Melancthon, Greek professor at Wittenberg.  
Luther appears before Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg, and appeals to the pope "better informed."  
Leonardo de Vinci, painter, Florentine school.  
(Nov. 9.) Leo publishes a bull confirming the doctrine of indulgences.
1519. Death of Maximilian, and election of Charles V., in preference to his competitor, Francis I. of France.  
(Jan.) Conference of Luther with Miltitz.  
Discovery of Mexico, by the Spaniards.  
Magellan, the Portuguese, first circumnavigates the globe.  
(June.) Disputation, at Leipsic, between Luther and Eccius.  
Zuingli preaching at Zurich against the corruptions of the Papacy.  
Luther publishes his first commentary on the Galatians.
1520. Various publications by Luther. In August he begins to attack the Papal *system*: before, he had only attacked certain erroneous *doctrines*, which he did not consider as belonging to the Roman Church.  
The interview, on "*The Field of the Cloth of Gold*," between Henry VIII. and Francis I.  
The Complutensian edition of the Bible published, under the auspices of Cardinal Ximenes.  
Raphael d'Urbino, painter, Roman school.
1521. Solyman II. takes Belgrade.  
First war between Charles V. and Francis I.  
(April.) Luther before the Diet of Worms.  
Luther conveyed to the castle of Wartburg, where he begins his translation of the Bible into German.  
Melancthon first publishes his *Loci Communes*.  
Gustavus Vasa, in Sweden.  
Henry VIII. of England writes against Luther, and is declared by Leo, "defender of the faith."  
Erasmus endeavours to pursue a middle course; pleases neither Leo nor Luther.  
Principles of Reformation in France, but condemned by the Sorbonne; extend to Denmark and Transylvania.

A. D.

1521. Ignatius Loyola receives the wound in battle, during the cure of which he embraces the notions for which he afterward became so famous.  
Erasmus settles at Basle. The University of Geneva founded.
1522. (March.) Adrian, the Fleming, preceptor to Charles V., elected pope on the death of Leo X.  
Rhodes conquered by the Turks, under Solymán.  
Diet at Nuremberg. Calls for a general council; and transmits a list of grievances to Rome.  
(Sept.) Luther's New Testament published at Wittenberg.  
The Portuguese establish a settlement at Macao.  
Revolt of Bourbon against Francis.
1523. Reformation introduced into Sweden.  
The insurrection of the peasants in Germany begins. Headed, after a time, by Thomas Munzer, a fanatic.  
Public disputation at Zurich between Zuingle and the Romanists. Zuingle's "Short and simple Introduction to the Doctrine of the Gospel" published.  
Reformation had made some progress in the Netherlands. A Dutch translation of the Bible published. Erasmus completes his Paraphrase of the New Testament.  
(Nov.) Death of Pope Adrian. Succeeded by Clement VII.
1524. The doctrines of Luther gain ground in Prussia. Are introduced into Scotland.  
Diet of Nuremberg. After it, at Ratisbon, Cardinal Campeggio endeavours to establish a league between several princes and bishops to uphold the Church of Rome. This the first league of the German princes.  
Beginning of the sacramental controversy: Luther maintaining consubstantiation; Carlostadt denying it. John Staupitz. Melancthon, professor of divinity at Wittenberg. Loyola studying at Barcelona: reading Kempis very attentively. First Danish translation of the New Testament.  
Invasion of France by the Imperialists, under the revolted Bourbon.

A. D

1525. Battle of Pavia. Francis taken prisoner. Carried to Madrid.
- Death of Frederic the Wise, elector of Saxony, Luther's first protector.
- Albert of Brandenburg embraces Lutheranism; is acknowledged by Poland hereditary duke of Teutonic Prussia.
- The *peasant insurgents* put down. Munzer taken and beheaded.
- Zuingle engages in the sacramental controversy, teaching similarly to Carlostadt.
- Marriage of Luther with Catherine de Bora.
- Solyman spreading his victorious armies over Western Asia. He besieges and takes Bagdad from the Persians.
- Lutherans persecuted, and, in some places, burnt.
1526. Treaty between Charles and Francis.
- The elector of Saxony and landgrave of Hesse enter into an engagement (at Torgau) for mutual support.
- The pope enters into an alliance (the Holy League) with France, Venice, and Milan, against Charles.
- Reformation established in Prussia. Tyndal's English translation of the New Testament. Luther's German Liturgy, and order of public worship.
1527. War between Francis and Charles. The Imperialists, under Bourbon, (who is slain,) take and sack Rome. The pope taken prisoner.
- Many of the writings of the reformers circulated in Italy, and meet with much acceptance. University of Marpurg founded.
- Henry VIII. begins to express his doubts of the lawfulness of the marriage between himself and his brother's widow.
- Solyman invades Hungary.
1528. Visitation of the churches in Saxony. Melancthon furnishing the visitation articles.
- Patrick Hamilton burnt at St. Andrew's, for heresy. Reformation widely extended in Germany and Switzerland.



A. D.

1529. Solyman invades Hungary, and advances to Vienna, which he besieges. Had to raise the siege; but acquired permanent possession of Moldavia and Wallachia.
- Diet of Spires; passes a decree unfavourable to the Reformation. The reforming princes PROTEST: hence the name of PROTESTANTS.
- Treaty between Charles and the pope; the emperor agreeing to bring the German heretics to obedience to the Roman see.
- (Oct.) Conferences at Marpurg between Saxon and Swiss divines.
- Divorce cause of Henry VIII. transferred to Rome. Disgrace of Cardinal Wolsey.
- Violent persecutions in the Netherlands and France.
1530. Knights of St. John receive a grant of Malta from the emperor.
- The Lutheran princes form the Smalcaldic League. Diet of Augsburg. Articles of religion ("Articles of Torgau") drawn up previously by the Lutherans. At the diet, other articles, drawn up by Melancthon, with these as their basis, presented; constituting "THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION." The final decree of the diet is against the reformers.
- Various universities declare Henry's marriage unlawful. The clergy in convocation acknowledge Henry supreme head of the church.
1531. Religious war in Switzerland. Zuingle slain. Bullinger, his successor, completes the establishment of a reformed discipline and worship in Zurich. Michael Servetus publishes his treatise, "De Trinitatis Erroribus."
1532. Pacification of Nuremberg, between the emperor and Protestants. Sale of indulgences at Geneva. Farel banished the city for preaching evangelical doctrines. Calvin, beginning to make himself known in Paris by his religious opinions, is obliged to flee.
1533. Cranmer made archbishop of Canterbury. The king's divorce publicly declared. In Scotland, the reformers violently persecuted.

A. D.

1533. Conquest of Peru, for the Spaniards, by Pizarro.

1534. Abolition of Papal supremacy in England by the parliament.

Luther's translation of the Bible, three volumes folio, published.

Ignatius Loyola forms a religious society, in Paris, for the defence of Catholicism.

Fanatical Anabaptists take possession of Munster. Death of Clement. Paul III. elected pope.

Several Protestants burnt at Paris.

1535. Francis negotiating with the Smalcaldic League.

Charles V. goes into Northern Africa; is victorious there.

Mines of Potosi discovered by the Spaniards.

Reformation at Geneva. Calvinism, and a democratic form of government, established there.

Lutheranism definitely established in Denmark.

Cromwell, vicegerent in England.

Melancthon publishes a new edition of his *Loci Communes*; far less Augustinian (or Calvinistic) than before. Calvin's "Institutes" published. Luther's *second* commentary on the Galatians.

Olivetan translates the Bible into French, for the French Protestants. Coverdale's English Bible.

1536. War between Charles and Francis again. The Imperialists invade France, unsuccessfully.

First Helvetic Confession published. Calvin settles at Geneva. Reformation advancing in England. A Bible ordered to be set up in churches to be read by the people. Dissolution of monasteries in England.

Death of Erasmus. Imperialists defeated by the Turks in Hungary.

1537. Religious agitations in England. The "*Institution of a Christian Man*" published; and "*Matthew's*" English Bible.

1538. Charles and Francis conclude a truce for ten years. Christian III., of Denmark, and other princes, join the Smalcaldic League.

A. D.

1539. An insurrection at Ghent, on account of a supposed invasion of their privileges by Charles. In England, the Act of the "Six Articles" passed. Cranmer complies; but Latimer and Shaxton resign their bishoprics. Final suppression of the English monasteries.
1540. Francis negotiating with the Protestant princes. Cromwell disgraced, &c., in England, and the Papal cause seems reviving. Some burnt for opposing Popery; others, for denying the king's supremacy.  
The "Society of Jesus" (that is, the Jesuits) formally established by Paul III.  
University of Lausanne founded.  
Francis Guicciardini, the historian, died.
1541. Francis Xavier, and other Jesuits, go from Portugal to the East Indies as missionaries.  
Solyman invades Hungary; Charles engages in a counter invasion of Algiers; but his fleet is dispersed by storms, and the whole expedition fails.  
Death of Ludovicus Vives, (commentator on Augustine,) of Pagninus, (Hebrew scholar,) and of Carlostadt.
1542. Another war between Francis and Charles.  
Paul III. convokes a council at Trent; but is opposed by Charles, who publishes a manifesto against it.
1543. The Spaniards take possession of the Isles of St. Lazarus, discovered by Magellan, and call them the Philip-pines.  
Turks powerful and successful in Hungary. Reformation established in Brunswick Wolfenbuttel; and suppressed by persecution at Metz.  
Death of Eccius.  
"*Necessary Doctrine and Erudition of a Christian Man*" published in England. Henry VIII. takes the title of king of Ireland.
1544. Peace between Francis and Charles. They agree to join their influence with the pope for a general council.  
The Reformation completed in Sweden. It continues to spread in Germany.

A. D.

1545. The Council of Trent formally opened ; though no business transacted.

In France, at Cabrières and Merindol, cruel persecutions of the Waldenses, by order of Francis.

Reformation of the Lower Palatinate.

Luther's commentaries on Hosea, Joel, &c., published.

1546. Struggle in Scotland; the crown and clergy *against*, nobles and people *for*, the Reformation.

(Jan. to March.) Ineffectual conferences between Romish and Protestant divines, at Ratisbon.

(February 18th.) Death of Martin Luther.

THE END.









